STEPS TO PERFECTION

An Islamic Curriculum For Youth

GRADE

10

Under the Guidance of

MOULANA NABI R. MIR (ABIDI)

AL-KISA FOUNDATION

UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

SABA

STEPS TO PERFECTION

An Islamic Curriculum for Youth

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the beloved Imām of our time عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. May Allah ﷻ hasten his reappearance and help us to become his true companions.

Acknowledgments

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ:

"*On the Day of Resurrection, the ink of the scholars will be weighed up against the blood of the martyrs, and the ink of the scholars will be heavier than the blood of the martyrs.*"

(*Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, Saying #3222)

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SABA and Al-Kisa Foundation are also very thankful to the Islamic organizations and schools of Ahlul Bayt at London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota, Toronto, and all others whose syllabus and books were used for the inspiration and creation of this curriculum.

Please remember all the people involved in this project in your prayers.

Authors and Editors: Dr. Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi) and Curriculum Committee

We pray to Allah ﷻ to give us the strength and tawfīq to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With duʿās,

Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Transliteration Chart

Arabic terms in this book have been transliterated according to the following guidelines*:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)	ص	ṣ
ء	ʾ(medial or final form)	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	ʿ
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	w
ش	sh	ي	y

ـَ	a	آ / ـَا / ىٰ	ā
ـِ	i	ـِي	ī
ـُ	u	ـُو	ū
ـّ	double letter		

*Please note that due to limitations, the transliteration is not 100% accurate in capturing *tajwīd* rules.

Please Note: The *sukūn* or *sākin* generally has two shapes, ۠ and ۡ which are both pronounced the same. For the purposes of this material, the ۠ has been used.

Symbol Usage

Throughout this work, when taking the name of any of the revered personalities in Islamic history, including Allah ﷻ, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his select family members, and religious scholars, we have employed the following Arabic symbols to show the reverence to each of them. As a part of Islamic culture, readers are requested to send the salutations upon these personalities when they read this work.

All glory belongs to Allah, the Glorified and Exalted
Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)

Mighty and Majestic (is He)
Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)

Blessings of Allah be upon him and his Immaculate Progeny
Used exclusively for Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

Peace be upon him
Used for one honored male

Peace be upon all of them
Used for three or more honored men or women or a combination

Peace be upon her
Used for one honored female

May Allah, the All-High, hasten his noble return
Used exclusively for Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

May his spirit be sanctified
Used for religious scholars

Preface and Introduction by Moulana Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Islamic Center

Salāmun ʿalaykum

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

ن ۚ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

"Nūn! [I swear] by the pen and what they inscribe!" [1]

All praise is for Allah ﷻ, the Lord and Nurturer of the worlds. It is an honor and pleasure to address you: dear teachers, administrators, educators, and parents. This verse of the Qurʾān demonstrates the sanctity of writing. When Allah ﷻ takes an oath by those who write and that which has been written, it clearly demonstrates the lofty status of writing and books. If we do a proper job in actualizing the potential of this medium, then Allah ﷻ guarantees us a high position. We know that Islam places a lot of emphasis on education as a whole.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ has a beautiful narration where he says:

أَوَّلُ الدِّينِ مَعْرِفَتُهُ، وَكَمَالُ مَعْرِفَتِهِ التَّصْدِيقُ بِهِ، وَكَمَالُ التَّصْدِيقِ بِهِ تَوْحِيدُهُ، وَكَمَالُ تَوْحِيدِهِ الاخْلاصُ لَهُ، وَكَمَالُ الاخْلاصِ لَهُ نَفْيُ الصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ، لِشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ صِفَة أَنَّها غَيْرُ المَوْصُوفِ، وَشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ مَوْصُوف أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ الصِّفَةِ....

"The first thing in religion is the recognition of Him (Allah); and the perfection of recognizing Him is to witness Him; and the perfection of witnessing Him is to believe in His Oneness; and the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as Pure; and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed, and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute…" [2]

Here, the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Muʾminīn ؑ) is demonstrating the importance of instilling systematic knowledge *(ʿilm)* and a deeper recognition and cognizance *(maʿrifah)* into our children, especially our youth. The Imām ؑ indicates that complete and perfect *maʿrifah* can only be reached by learning and grasping the true concept of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd),* and the beliefs that stem from it from a young age.

Human beings love beauty and goodness innately, and because Allah ﷻ is perfect Beauty, and Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ are the manifestations of Allah's Beauty, when we find the knowledge and deeper recognition of this beauty, we will automatically be drawn to it, and it will blossom in our hearts. Similarly, if we can achieve this for our youth, then they will automatically be drawn to it, and will be able to truly connect with their faith, and become ambassadors of Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ. It will also cultivate within them a drive and passion to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qalam (68), Verse 1.
2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1.

It goes without saying of course, that this knowledge must be from the correct sources, comprehensive in nature, and have topics that are relevant for the guidance of our youth—particularly for issues and challenges that they face on a daily basis. The knowledge that our youth acquire should be foundational and a precursor to improve, learn further, and build a love for Islam, Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt within themselves.

After delving further, we find that this education can be obtained in two formats: informal and formal. Informal education entails formats such as speeches, classes, discussions, and a teacher's interactions within a classroom. Formal education refers to the standards and guidelines that teachers follow when teaching, commonly referred to as the curriculum. While both forms of education are integral to the learning process, a cohesive curriculum is crucial in ensuring that the deliverance of education is done so in an organized and logical sequence.

Additionally, as we know, Islam is a **complete** way of life. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Say: 'Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord (and Nurturer) of the worlds.'" [3]

In an ideal world, our education system would be all-encompassing. However, this is difficult to implement due to various limitations and circumstances. For example, even full-time Islamic schools generally only allocate a few hours a week for Islamic studies. Similarly, weekend schools only operate for a few hours once a week, at most for about 30-34 weeks during the year. Therefore, weekend schools and full-time Islamic schools overall do not have the capacity to adopt a completely integrated system for our children to learn Islam in conjunction with other necessary subjects. As a result, most schools focus on these five Islamic subjects: Qurʾān, *ʿAqāʾid* (Beliefs), *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), History, and *Akhlāq* (Morals and Etiquettes). It is with this in mind that we are honored to compile and develop a Pre-K to Grade 12 Curriculum for Islamic Studies and Qurʾān, as well as for life skills and contemporary issues related to our daily lives.

Alḥamdulillāh, Al-Kisa Foundation is pleased to present the Islamic Studies Curriculum, which focuses on four core subjects: *ʿAqāʾid*, *Fiqh*, History, and *Akhlāq*. Inshāʾallāh, we hope to further develop the fifth core subject, Qurʾān, in areas such as *Tajwīd* (rules related to recitation), *Mafāhīm* (understanding), and *Tafsīr* (commentary and deeper understanding). The journey to create this Curriculum started over 20 years ago, but the true emphasis and efforts were over the last 6 years where we piloted the lessons, and got feedback from the community. At this time, the Pre-K to Grade 6 Curriculum has undergone many iterations and revisions to the extent that it has reached a satisfactory level.

Alḥamdulillāh, the Grade 7-12 Curriculum has reached some great milestones with your *duʿās*. Having been piloted for a few years to test the content, incorporate feedback, many editings, etc., with the blessings of Allah ﷻ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, it is now being printed professionally. This Curriculum is a compilation of different resources, both existing and new, based on input from various individuals and institutions. As a result, some of the books or lessons are quite large, and it is at the discretion of the teacher to skip certain lessons if need be, since extra material was added as additional resources. Although we had initially created a scope and sequence, and planned to fully develop the lessons ourselves, we ran into some unforeseen hurdles with the COVID-19 Pandemic, but have been able to overcome those by the blessings of the Almighty.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 162.

A more detailed overview on how this Curriculum was developed is outlined below.

METHODS USED TO COMPILE THIS CURRICULUM

1. As with all projects under Al-Kisa Foundation, the curriculum was guided by scholars, educators, and the Kisa mission team.

2. Several resources were used in collaboration with other developers, including, but not limited to, madrasah.net, the Kawther Learning Center Team, the Islamic Syllabus Team, the Sirat Curriculum Team, as well as books of great scholars like Shahīd Motahhari, Āyatullāh Ja'far Sobhani, etc.

3. The first step was identifying the challenges faced by youth and creating a scope and sequence of this information by organizing it into five categories: ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, akhlāq, and contemporary issues. After this, we designed 64 lessons in order to fit the average Sunday School schedule, also bearing in mind that the material could be expanded further for a full-time school.

4. Next, each lesson was given guiding points by myself or other scholars to guide the outcome and method of each lesson.

5. Each lesson was then written by an educator, reviewed once again by a scholar to verify the content, and finally given back to an educator to create worksheets, etc.

6. This would finalize the content portion of the lesson, after which the graphics team would create the layout and graphics for each.

7. Of course, this was a monumental task with many individuals involved, all of which was tracked using a project management software.

Once the final review was done by myself, the curriculum, along with supporting slides, activities, and games, was published online on our Salam Online website (www.salamonline.education) for the benefit of others. I am humbled to be a part of this process, and am very aware that despite our best efforts, there is lots of room for improvement. I humbly ask all of the parents, educators, students, school administrators, and others who utilize this curriculum to please bless us with your constructive feedback, criticism, suggestions, and comments. After all, only the Qurʾān is free from all defects and mistakes!

Additionally, please do consider sharing your resources with us so that we can possibly incorporate them into the curriculum and enhance it inshāʾAllāh. We are interested in any teaching methodologies, supplemental curriculum, or additional resources used. Digital resources, such as presentations, games, and quizzes, are also appreciated and can be shared with **admin@alkisafoundation.org**. Jazākallāhu khayran!

We hope that you and your children enjoy this Curriculum, and that it is beneficial to the community at large, inshāʾAllāh. Please do remember us in your *duʿās,* and provide us with any feedback so that we can make future improvements. We look forward to hearing from you.

We pray to Allah ﷻ to give us the strength and the Divine providence and ability *(tawfīq)* to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With Duʿās,
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

About the Board ʿĀlim

Moulana Nabi R. Mir (Abidi) is a scholar, an educator, a father, and an enthusiast for creating educational infrastructure and Islamic resources for the benefit of the global community. He is a pioneer of always thinking "outside of the box" by supporting the creation of innovative materials to engage readers of all ages to pick up Islamic books, interact with Qurʾānic games, learn from the Steps to Perfection Curriculum, and begin their life-long journey of holistic education.

Being a dedicated student and graduate of *Darse Khārij* from the *Ḥawzah* (the highest level of Islamic Studies in the Seminary), Moulana Abidi understands the intrinsic value of Islamic education. Also, having grown up in India, and now residing in the United States, he has had the honor of traveling to various communities and meeting many community leaders all over the globe. He values the importance of collaboration and working together to optimize our communal potential, and create open source platforms so that information and resources are available and accessible to everyone around the world.

You, dear reader, are now part of the Al-Kisa family.
Share the word, and join the mission.

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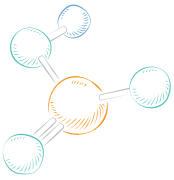

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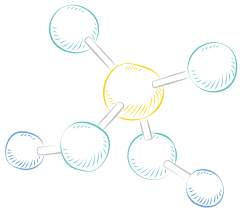

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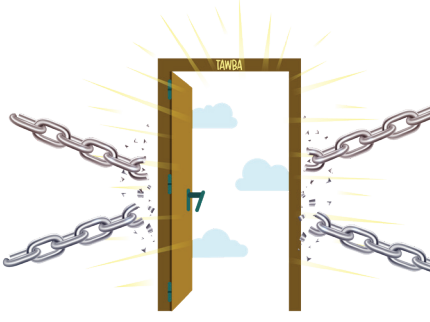

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ʿAQĀʾID
(BELIEFS)

CHAPTER 1

Existence & Attributes of Allah ﷻ

1.1 Cosmological Argument

1.2 Some Attributes of Allah ﷻ

1.3 Wisdom and Life of Allah ﷻ

1.1 Cosmological Argument

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Contrast beings that are needy versus those that are needless.
- State the basic premises of the Cosmological Argument, and how their conclusion points to the existence of Allah ﷻ.
- Provide a logical answer to the commonly asked question: "If God created everything, then who created God?"
- Become familiar with the two sets of verses in the Noble Qur'ān which teach us about the neediness of human beings, and the Self-Sufficiency of Allah ﷻ.

REVIEW

In the grade 9 lessons on *ʿAqāʾid*—Beliefs, we discussed a number of important concepts. We learned that:

- It is very important to investigate religion, and not investigating religion can have great potential harms.
- Some of the reasons why people turn away from religion is because they do not even make an effort to research anything, however, these are not valid reasons to refrain from investigating religion.
- It is very important to have a worldview that is not limited to a material/secular understanding of this world.
- We all have some level of inner awareness and knowledge of Allah ﷻ.
- There are some reasons why people may become alienated from this knowledge of Allah ﷻ.
- The Argument from Design is a logical way to prove the existence of Allah ﷻ.
- Allah ﷻ is All-Just; and we looked at how this relates to free will, Allah's knowledge, differences in creation, and the presence of apparent evil in creation.

In grade 10, we will learn more about our beliefs *(ʿAqāʾid)* with further discussions on Allah ﷻ and His Attributes, before moving on to discuss Prophethood *(Nubuwwah)*, Imamate *(Imāmah)*, and the Day of Judgment *(Qiyāmah)*.

COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

JORDAN: Other than the Argument by Design, what other proof or argument can we use to demonstrate the existence of God?

ME (THE MUSLIM): Let me explain the Cosmological Argument:

First, let us define the terms needy and needless, for the purpose of this argument.

'Needy' is a state where a being is in need of something or someone in order to come into existence, or to stay in existence. The existence of such a being is called possible[1] because it is possible that the being exists (if supplied with existence), but it is also possible for the being to not exist (if the necessary things to exist are not provided).

1 In philosophy, the term used for neediness is *contingency*. A needy being is referred to as being one who is *contingent*.

'Needless' is a state where one is not in need of any other being in order to exist, or to stay in existence. The existence of such a being is called necessary because that being must exist; non-existence is impossible for this being.

Now, suppose we were to divide all beings into these two categories:

1. Beings that are needy of other beings for existence, or whose existence is possible.
2. Beings that are needless of other beings for existence, or whose existence is necessary.

Activity 1.1a: Scenarios

Discuss the following scenarios with your partner. Once you have completed your discussion, then independently work to answer the questions based on your discussions.

Let us say there are two needy beings, A and B, that are both in need of being given existence from someone else.

1. Can A bring oneself into existence, or can B bring oneself into existence? Why or why not?

2. Can they both work together so that A gives B existence, and B gives A existence? Why or why not?

3. Explain in your own words, the only possible way for both A and B to come into existence.

This argument is as follows:

PREMISE 1: There are needy beings in the universe.

EXPLANATION: The universe is made up of many, many needy beings. Examples include plants—who need water, soil, sunlight, oxygen, pollinators, and carbon dioxide to survive. In fact, they need even more than that—they need the very existence they have as well. Animals are needy in similar ways. Human beings also have basic needs like plants and animals do. They are in need of their organs, the different systems of their body that keep them alive, clothing, shelter, food, safety, and their very existence. Planets as a whole are in need of the space that they occupy, and the system that keeps them from running into each other and being destroyed.

PREMISE 2: It is impossible for needy beings to give existence to themselves.

EXPLANATION: Let us look at the group of all needy beings. How did this group come to be? There are two possible answers:

First Possible Answer: The first possibility is that they came to be from themselves.

Let us take a closer look and break this down into a few logical steps:

- **a)** Suppose that needy beings who do not yet exist were to bring themselves into existence, depending only on themselves.
- **b)** Before doing so, at least one of them would need to pre-exist. That is because of a general principle: one who lacks something cannot give that to itself or others. For example, if there are a group of students in a room who want to buy something, and they do not have any money at all to do so, then just by getting together and pooling their (non-existent) money together, they obviously will not be able to gather any sum of money.
- **c)** However, (b) contradicts (a), because if we assume that one of them pre-existed, then it goes against the assumption that they do not yet even exist!
- **d)** Therefore, (a) cannot be possible. Needy beings cannot bring themselves into existence.

Second Possible Answer: The second possibility is that this group was given existence from some being that is outside of the group of needy beings. This means that the one who gave them existence has to be from the group of needless beings.

CONCLUSION: Therefore, there must be a needless being whose existence is necessary, who is independent of others for existence, and who gave the needy beings their existence.

JORDAN: Okay, now I understand that the existence of needy beings proves the existence of a needless being. However, how can the needless being really be "needless?" How can the needless being not have a need for anyone to give it existence? People who believe in God always say that God creates everything. If that is the case, then who created God?

ME: In order to answer your question, let us review what the Cosmological Argument above has proven to us:

1. All needy beings require a cause.
2. There is a needless being whose existence is necessary who provides needy beings with their existence.

The Cosmological Argument **does not state that all beings** require a cause to bring them into existence. Rather, it argues that **needy beings require a cause.** The needless being, by definition, is not in need of a cause.

Therefore, the question of "Who brought it into existence?" or "Who created it?" cannot apply to the needless being.

Let us use a simple example of anchovy soup to better understand this concept.

What makes anchovy soup salty? Obviously, the anchovies in the soup.

What makes anchovies salty? Anchovies are salty because of the salt water they live in.

What makes salt water salty? Clearly, the salt in the water.

Now, what makes salt salty?

If this question is assuming that there is something other than salt that makes it salty, it is not a correct assumption, because salt is salty by its essence, meaning that is just the way it is. You can never take saltiness away from salt, or else it would not be salt anymore. Similarly, a square has four sides by definition; and a triangle has three. Sugar is sweet, and sour lemons are sour. These are **essential properties**, properties that are part of what makes something what it is, and these can never be removed from that item.

Activity 1.1b: Quick Write

Before each question below, your teacher will set a time for 2 minutes. In that amount of time, you need to answer the question; if you have any time remaining, then continue to expand on your answer.

1. Think of your own example of something that has an essential property to its existence (i.e. salt is salty, lemons are sour, etc. but you must think of a new one). Explain.

2. What is an essential property of human beings? How does this property further prove that we are needy beings?

Similarly, the needless being has an **essential** property of existing; and that being just exists, as part of who the being is, without having to be given that property by something or someone else.

The question of ***"Who created it?"*** applies to a being who is in need of having been created, just like the question of ***"What makes this salty?"*** applies to food that is not salt itself. For a being who is needless of everyone else, the question of ***"Who created this?"*** just does not apply. That being always existed, and will continue to exist because existence is just part of the being's essence, just like saltiness is part of the essence of salt, and having four sides is part of the essence of being a square.

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT IN THE QUR'ĀN

In the Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ challenges human beings to reflect upon the origin of their creation:

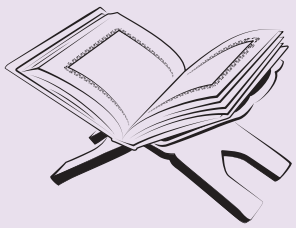
أَمْ خُلِقُوا۟ مِنْ غَيْرِ شَىْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ ٱلْخَـٰلِقُونَ ۝ أَمْ خَلَقُوا۟ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ ۚ بَل لَّا يُوقِنُونَ ۝

"Or were they created from nothing? Or are they [their own] creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? No, rather they have no certainty!" [2]

The Argument presented above can be understood according to an interpretation of these verses. The first verse asks: "Do you have a cause, or did you just come into existence without a cause?" Obviously, we human beings did not exist at one time, then we came into existence. The *āyah* then continues and asks: "Did you create yourself or did someone else create you?" If someone were to say that human beings created themselves, then what about the heavens and the earth? Did you create them as well, even though you know they came way before you? Therefore, there must be a Being who is the Source of your existence who is uncreated and eternal!

STOP AND REFLECT: Imagine if someone tried to use the Theory of Evolution to explain how the earth/universe came to be created before you. How would you respond to this using information from this lesson?

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:



يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ أَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْغَنِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ ۝ إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۝ وَمَا ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ۝

"O humankind! You are the ones who are in need of Allah, while Allah—He is the All-Sufficient, the All-Praised. If He wishes, He can do away with you, and bring about a new creation; and that is not a hard thing for Allah." [3]

These verses make us aware that we human beings are very needy *(fuqarāh)*. No matter what we might own in this world, we owe the existence of everything we have, even ourselves, to a Being other than us—and that is Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ, on the other hand, is the One who is completely Self-Sufficient and is needless of anyone and anything *(Ghanī)*.

2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah aṭ-Ṭūr (52), Verses 35-36.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Fāṭir (35), Verses 15-17.

Activity 1.1c: Review Questions

1. Why is it not possible to take away saltiness from salt? Is salt still going to be salty if I combine it with other spices?

2. Suppose there is a group of beggars who do not own anything. They get together and ask one another for help, but they do not have anything to give to each other in the first place. So, they decide to work together—they rummage through trash to find scraps to eat, and things that might be sellable items. Eventually, they set up a second-hand store selling other people's junk and become very rich. This lesson stated that a group of people who do not have anything could never accumulate wealth by themselves even if they were to all come together—does this example disprove what was said? Why or why not?

3. Imagine there was someone who had gathered enough food and water for the rest of their life, such that they no longer needed to get any food or water from anyone else. In the categorization of a person being needy or needless, would such an individual now be considered as being needless?

4. In your own words, answer the question: “If God created everything, then who created God?”

5. Pick one of the sets of verses above, and explain how they can be used to show the existence of the needless Being.

6. **VENN DIAGRAM:** Now that you have learned about the Argument from Design and the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God, complete the Venn Diagram below highlighting the important points of each Argument, as well as any similarities they both have.

DESIGN

COSMOLOGICAL

1.2 Some Attributes of Allah ﷻ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify and define some key Attributes of Allah ﷻ, such as His Knowledge and Power; and the general fundamental differences between Allah's Attributes and the attributes of His creation.
- Compare and contrast specific Attributes of Allah ﷻ with the attributes of His creation.
- Identify at a basic level, information about the Attributes of Allah ﷻ conveyed in verses of the Qurʾān and *aḥādīth*.
- Understand how the knowledge of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ can be of assistance to a believer in real life situations.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can knowing the Attributes of Allah ﷻ help you feel more connected to Him? What might be different if we did not have these Attributes of His?

ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH ﷻ

Allah ﷻ describes Himself with various Attributes in the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have also described Him with various Attributes that can be found in *aḥādīth* and *duʿās*. In order to know and appreciate Allah ﷻ better, let us become more familiar with some of the key Attributes of our Almighty Creator.

Before doing so, an important point to note is that whenever we talk about Allah ﷻ being described with a particular Attribute—for example, knowledge—we cannot compare Allah's Attributes with ours. For example, take the Attribute of *ʿIlm*, or the Knowledge of Allah ﷻ. Our knowledge is very limited, faulty, and it is acquired. However, Allah's Knowledge is infinite and perfect. This same concept applies to all other Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and is expressed in a number of verses where Allah ﷻ says: *"There is nothing like Him."* [1]

ALLAH'S KNOWLEDGE

Allah's Knowledge is:

Absolute and Unlimited:	A human being's knowledge is always limited by one's circumstances and capacity. We can only know things to a certain extent. For example, we may know some things about the people who we can see around us, but that too, up to a limited level. We cannot read their minds, nor can we see things that do in secrecy. However, Allah ﷻ has no such limitations.
Eternal:	A human being can only know what has happened in the past and what is happening now (to a certain extent). However, Allah ﷻ knows what will happen in the future as well. This does not mean that He forces it to happen in that way, rather, He knows all the choices that will be made by each and every being in existence.
Not Dependent on Any Means:	A human being needs some form of means, such as eyes, a telescope, a satellite, a microscope, etc., in order to know about things. However, Allah ﷻ does not need any means, because His Knowledge is presential, meaning that everything is right in front of Him.
Error free:	Human beings are often confident that they know something, but then later on they find that to be untrue. However, Allah ﷻ never errs in His all encompassing Knowledge.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shūrā (42), Verse 11.

Unchanging:	Human beings often show reactions or changes depending on what they learn. However, the Knowledge of Allah ﷻ does not cause any change in Him whatsoever.
Detailed and Subtle:	For human beings, knowledge of this world is often general and lacks detail. As much as science has progressed in its understanding of the world around us, there are still many details that have not been discovered yet. Allah ﷻ however, emphasizes in the Qurʾān that His Knowledge is extremely detailed and subtle.

It can be very useful to be aware of the vastness and infiniteness of Allah's Knowledge. Allah ﷻ Himself calls us to be aware of this in various verses of the Qurʾān. The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ also encouraged us to learn about and be aware of the extent of Allah's Knowledge.

Activity 1.2a: Interpret it!

Read the verses or narrations below, and identify what conclusions can be drawn from them.

1. *"He knows whatever enters into the earth and whatever emerges from it, and whatever descends from the sky and whatever ascends into it; and He is the All-Merciful, the All-Forgiving."* [2]

   a. What is this verse telling us on a literal level?

   b. Complete the chart below with specific examples of each thing the verse mentions.

PART OF THE VERSE	REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES
"...whatever enters into the earth…"	
"....whatever emerges from it…"	
"...whatever descends from the sky…"	
"...whatever ascends into it…"	

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Sabāʾ (34), Verse 2.

2. *"Say: 'Whether you hide what is in your hearts, or disclose it, Allah knows it; and He knows whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is on the earth; and Allah has Power over all things.'"* [3]

   a. What do you think this verse is telling us on a literal level?

   b. How does it provide proof of the vastness of Allah's Knowledge?

3. The Commander of the Faithful, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Allah is All-Aware of the cries of wild animals in the mountains and deserts; the sins of His servants committed in private; the movements of fish in the deep seas; and also the formation of waves by strong winds."*

   a. Some of the examples above are things which human beings have researched and now have limited answers to. How do these things demonstrate some of what Allah's Knowledge encompasses?

   b. Are there any other examples in nature that can help us understand Allah's infinite Knowledge?

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 29.

Think about the various aspects of your daily life—good and bad. What are some instances in which having this awareness of Allah's Knowledge can be of help to you?

Activity 1.2a: Answer Key

1. This verse tells us that Allah's Knowledge encompasses:
   - **a.** Whatever enters into the earth: For example, the placement of a seed into the ground.
   - **b.** Whatever emerges from the earth: For example, the growth of a plant or a flower; the release of natural gasses from the earth; or the formation of precious stones and metals that are discovered.
   - **c.** Whatever descends from the sky: For example, rain or angels which come down upon the earth.
   - **d.** Whatever ascends into it: For example, birds and butterflies which fly high into the skies.

2. This verse tells us that Allah's Knowledge encompasses:
   - **a.** Whatever thoughts and feelings might be in the hearts, even though they may not be shared with anyone else.
   - **b.** Everything that exists in the heavens and the earth.

3. This *ḥadīth* tells us that Allah's Knowledge encompasses:
   - **a.** The cries of wild animals that most human beings would not be able to hear (because the animals would either run away, or attack them if they were present).
   - **b.** The sins committed when people think they are alone, and no one can see them.
   - **c.** The movements of fish in the deep seas where it is so dark and cold, and there is so much pressure that it would be difficult or close to impossible for human beings to even attempt to go down there.
   - **d.** The complex formulation of waves in the oceans.

Remembering the extent of Allah's Knowledge can be useful in the following circumstances:

- **a.** When tempted to commit a sin, knowing that Allah ﷻ sees our actions and is fully aware of even our inner intentions. For example, the wife of the king of Egypt, Zulaykhah, covered an idol before trying to commit her act of indecency; however, Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ told her that the true Lord is All-Watchful (meaning you cannot cover up anything from Him).
- **b.** When standing for *ṣalāh,* or asking from Allah ﷻ, knowing that He is All-Aware of our needs.
- **c.** When facing difficulties in life, knowing that He is fully aware of our struggles, and He is the only One who can truly help us.
- **d.** When trying to learn something new, knowing that He is the One who knows everything and is the ultimate Source of all knowledge.

Related to the Knowledge of Allah ﷻ are the Attributes of Allah ﷻ being the One who hears all things, and the One who sees everything. The source of Allah ﷻ being *as-Samīʿ*—the All-Hearing, and *al-Baṣīr*—the All-Seeing, is His infinite Knowledge. He is All-Aware of everything and knows each and every thing in existence that can be heard or seen. He is not, however, in need of any organs or external things to be able to see or hear.

Some *āyāt* that mention Allah's seeing and hearing are the following:

Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, (49), Verse 18:
"And Allah sees what you do."

Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 28:
"Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, and All-Seeing."

When Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was advised to go to Firʿawn and invite him to Allah ﷻ, he felt scared and worried for his family and children. He said to Allah ﷻ: *"O my Nurturer, who will take care of my family and children?"*

Allah ﷻ answered him: *"Strike your staff on that rock."* Prophet Mūsā ﷺ did as he was commanded and the rock split open. Inside the rock, there was another rock. He hit that smaller rock with his staff, and that smaller rock also split open. Inside of it, there was one more rock. Again, he hit the third rock, which also split open. Inside that third rock, there was a worm who had something in its mouth and was eating it. The spiritual veils of the unheard were removed for him, and he heard the worm say:

سُبْحانَ مَنْ يرانِي و
يسْمَعُ كَلامِي و يعْرِفُ
مَكانِي و يذْكُرُنِي و لا
ينْسانِي

"Free from defect is the One who hears my words and knows where I am, and Who remembers me and does not forget me." [4]

By showing Prophet Mūsā ﷺ this amazing sight, Allah ﷻ reassured him that He takes care of everyone and everything, and he should move forward with performing his duties and relying on Allah ﷻ. This little worm lived deep inside three rocks; but as it prayed to Allah ﷻ, it had certainty that even from this small, dark place, Allah ﷻ would hear it because one of Allah's titles is *as-Samīʿ*—the All-Hearing.

ALLAH'S POWER

Another Attribute of Allah ﷻ is His *Qudrah*, translated as Power/Ability/Capability. Allah ﷻ is *'al-Qādir'*—the All-Powerful One, also known as the All-Capable, and the Omnipotent Being.

Qudrah refers to someone's ability to perform what they desire. Allah ﷻ is perfectly able to do whatever He pleases, and is not limited in any way in accomplishing what He desires. He is not in need of anything or anyone in order to do what He wants, unlike human beings who require many things, such as energy, ability, strength, etc., which is often provided by other sources.

In many verses *(āyāt)* of the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: 'Allah is All-Capable of everything,' or in other words, 'Allah has Power over everything.'

4 Haqqī, Ismāʿīl Bursivī, *Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān*, Vol. 4, Pp. 96-97. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

OMNIPOTENCE PARADOX

One of the objections that is brought up against Allah ﷻ being All-Powerful is known as the 'Omnipotence Paradox.' This objection is phrased in different ways, but a common form is the following:

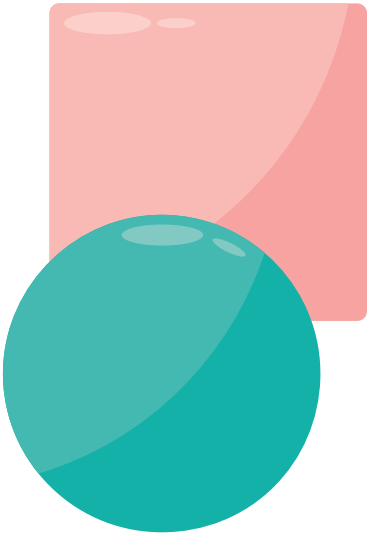
If Allah ﷻ has power over everything, can He create something that He cannot lift?

A similar question is: Can He create a being that He cannot destroy?

STOP AND REFLECT: How might you answer these questions? Consider what it would mean if you answered yes. What about no?

These questions appear to create a 'paradox' where we can neither really answer yes or no. If we answer yes, then it shows that Allah ﷻ is limited in His ability, because He would not be able to lift something or destroy something that He created. If we answer no, then once again it shows that Allah ﷻ is limited in His ability, because He was not able to create something (i.e. something that He cannot lift, or something that He cannot destroy after creating it). Therefore, people have tried to doubt that Allah ﷻ is capable of everything by using this paradox, because in either case it shows that Allah ﷻ is not capable of everything.

RESPONSE TO THE OMNIPOTENCE PARADOX



There are certain concepts that can be imagined in our mind, but in the real world, they are 'incoherent' meaning that they just cannot exist. For example, we can imagine the concept of a square that is a circle, but we cannot ever actualize such a concept because it just cannot exist. Such a thing is called 'incoherent.' The reason why such a concept can never exist is because of the Law of Contradiction which states that **A and not A** cannot both exist at the same time. The proof of this Law of Contradiction is self-evident, meaning that anyone and everyone knows this to be true.

Based on this Law of Contradiction, something that is too heavy for Allah ﷻ to lift is also contradictory, because it means that something which was created and is needy of Allah ﷻ is also not needy of Allah ﷻ, because something that is 'too heavy for Allah ﷻ to lift' would be needless of Allah ﷻ providing it existence. Therefore something that is too heavy for Allah ﷻ to lift is incoherent.

Similarly, a being that Allah ﷻ cannot destroy would be a second needless, necessary being, and we have already proven that it is impossible for there to be more than one necessary being. So such a being is also incoherent.

The statement that "Allah ﷻ is All-Capable of everything" means that Allah ﷻ is capable over everything that is in the realm of possibility and is coherent. Incoherent things are contradictory and infeasible, and they are not worthy of consideration when discussing Allah's Power.

Once, a man asked Imām ʿAlī ﷺ: *"Can Allah cause the entire earth to fit into an egg, without shrinking the world or enlarging the egg?"* Imām ʿAlī ﷺ responded: *"Weakness can never be attributed to Allah, but what you ask about cannot be."* [5] In other words, it is something that is incoherent and illogical.

In summary, Allah ﷻ is capable of everything that is a 'thing' meaning it is feasible, coherent, and worthy of consideration; not a concept which is incoherent.

Allah ﷻ is capable of everything that is a 'thing' meaning it is feasible, coherent, and worthy of consideration

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it necessary to understand the difference between the Power of Allah ﷻ versus that of a human being? How can it help us in our daily life to truly understand the Power of Allah ﷻ?

BENEFITS OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONTEMPLATING ALLAH'S POWER

Knowing and pondering upon the fact that Allah ﷻ is Almighty has incredible benefits, some of which include:

- Never feeling that one is alone or abandoned, and if such a thought ever comes to one's mind, then one remembers that (a) Allah ﷻ knows about us; and (b) He is All-Capable of solving our problems.
- Not being impressed by the worldly power amassed by the enemies of Allah ﷻ, because ultimately Allah's Power reigns over them.
- Never giving up hope or thinking that our efforts are futile, because as long as we are striving for the truth, we should know that we are working in the direction that the Almighty desires, and Allah ﷻ has promised that He will make the truth prevail.
- Not being impressed with our own efforts, because we attribute any power that we have to the Ultimate Source of Power which is none other than Allah ﷻ. Whatever good we do, or any action that we perform, is all from Allah ﷻ.

One of the *'adhkār'* (plural of *dhikr*) that the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have taught us to say which reminds us about the Power of Allah ﷻ is the *dhikr* of: *Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata ʾillā billāh*, meaning 'there is no Power or Might except by Allah.'

5 Kāshānī, Muḥsin Fayḍ, *Al-Wāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 322.

Activity 1.2b: Review Questions

1. In each row of the table below, list different aspects of how the Knowledge of Allah ﷻ is incomparably greater than the knowledge of a human being.

KNOWLEDGE OF ALLAH ﷻ	HUMAN VERSION OF THAT KNOWLEDGE

2. Pick one part of an *āyah* or *ḥadīth* that mentions the Knowledge of Allah ﷻ, and explain how one can benefit from understanding this *āyah/ḥadīth.*

3. Name two practical benefits of knowing that Allah ﷻ is All-Seeing and All-Hearing.

4. What do *'qudrah'* and *'al-Qādir'* mean?

5. What is a paradox? Why does the question: "Can Allah ﷻ cause the entire earth to fit into an egg, without shrinking the world or enlarging the egg?" bring up a paradox?

6. Look at a translation of *Duʿāʾ Jawshan al-Kabīr.*

   a. Write the translation of one line from this *duʿāʾ* that relates to the Knowledge of Allah ﷻ, and another that relates to the Power of Allah ﷻ.

   b. Why do you think this is one of the recommended *duʿās* to read/recite on auspicious nights such as *Laylatul Qadr*?

1.3 Wisdom and Life of Allah ﷻ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify and define some key Attributes of Allah ﷻ, namely Wisdom and Life.
- Compare and contrast specific Attributes of Allah ﷻ with the attributes of His creation.
- Identify, at a basic level, information about the Attributes of Allah ﷻ conveyed in certain *āyāt* of the Qurʾān and some *aḥādīth*.
- Understand how knowledge of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ can be of assistance to a believer in real life situations.

ATTRIBUTE OF WISDOM OF ALLAH ﷻ

Another Attribute of Allah ﷻ is that He possesses *ḥikmah* which can be translated as wisdom. He is *al-Ḥakīm*-the All-Wise. One of the meanings of *ḥikmah* is having the most perfect knowledge. *Ḥikmah* can also refer to the way something is done.

Allah ﷻ is called *Ḥakīm* because He performs His actions:

- properly.
- on the basis of wisdom and for a good reason, not for no reason (just for the sake of it), or for an invalid reason (like selfish interests).
- fairly and justly (putting everything in its proper place).

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

> "Do you imagine that We created you out of vain and that you will not return (back) to Us?" [1]

This verse shows that:

a) Allah ﷻ created us for a purpose, and

b) That purpose will be realized in the Hereafter.

He also says: *"And We did not create the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them for play (with no useful reason)."* [2]

There is a reason and purpose behind the creation of this world and everything that is within it. Something that is 'for play and useless' is purposeless, or with a purpose that is imaginary.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think of something that is 'for play and useless.' Does it have a purpose? What might be the motive for this purposeless action?

We know that Allah ﷻ is All-Knowledgeable, All-Powerful, and All-Merciful. It is a necessary consequence of having these Attributes that He is also All-Wise. This is because a Creator who has absolute Knowledge, Power, and Mercy will always act with purpose, and put things in their right place to bring about balance in the creation.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verse 115.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ad-Dukhān (44), Verse 38.

It is also important to consider the difference between Allah's Wisdom and wisdom in human beings. Wisdom in human beings is:

- Limited in the case of most human beings (with the exception of the immaculate ones, i.e. the *Maʿṣūmīn*), while in Allah ﷻ it is Absolute.
- Dependent on Allah's Will and permission.
- In human beings, the definition of wisdom is the same as above, but with the meaning that it correlates to the reality of the world of existence. However, when it comes to Allah ﷻ, He **IS** the reality of all the worlds.

Allah's Wisdom applies not only to the creation of the universe as a whole, but it also extends to the small things that occur in the life of each person. Allah ﷻ gives each person the blessings that will help one reach one's perfection at every stage of their life; and He withholds certain things that may impair one's journey to their perfection. The following narration explains what is happening in the realm of Allah's Wisdom when we are seeking something in our lives.

A tradition reported from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ states:

"A servant will be about to stumble on something that they want from this lowly world, and Allah will remember them from above the seven skies. He will say: 'O angels! My servant is about to attain one of their desires from the world, but if I allow them to attain it, then I will have opened for them a door to Hellfire. Therefore, I will swerve it away from them.' The servant will enter the morning biting their fingers (because they did not attain that thing they wanted), saying: 'Who attained it before me? Who tricked me?' While in actuality, it was an act of Allah's Mercy that Allah showed that person through His infinite Mercy (and Wisdom)." [3]

ATTRIBUTE OF LIFE OF ALLAH ﷻ

Allah ﷻ possesses *Ḥayāt* or Life. He is the Ever-Living, *al-Ḥayy.*

3 Abū Nuʿaym, Aḥmad, *Ḥilyat al-Awlīyāʾ wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfīyaʾ*, Vol. 7, P. 208.

Activity 1.3a: Charting

Complete the chart below of some living and non-living things.

LIVING	NON-LIVING

1. What are the major differences you notice between these two lists?

2. In what way would you expect a living thing to respond to you when you interact with it? Give a specific example.

3. Does the response of a living thing depend on what it is? Please explain.

4. How is your interaction between a living and non-living thing different?

Normally, when we think of living things and compare them to non-living things, we notice differences such as growth, the ability to talk, eating, drinking, and ability to reproduce.

However, when discussing life with respect to Allah ﷻ, what is meant is something different. Allah ﷻ being the Ever-Living means that:

a) He is the Source of all life.

b) He is the One who is supremely alive, meaning that He is All-Aware and performs His all of actions out of complete awareness. Unlike our lives, His life is not restricted by time, or place, or anything at all–He always was, He always is, and He always will be.

In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: *"He is the Ever-Living…"* [4] which demonstrates that He is the only One who is truly the Ever-Living without having been given life. However, everything else that lives is dependent on Allah ﷻ giving it life.

Allah ﷻ also says: *"Rely on the One who is Ever-Living who does not die."* [5]

Human beings are in need of relying on someone to help us navigate our affairs, because of our inherent weakness. In Islam, the concept of reliance on Allah ﷻ is called *tawakkul*. In this verse, Allah ﷻ says that we should rely on Him because He is the only One who is truly alive. Relying on someone who is asleep some of the time, or is incapable or unreliable, or who might not be alive to help us when we need, would be making a bad choice. Allah ﷻ says the only One who is worthy of relying upon is Him because He is **always** there for us.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said about the Almighty One: *"O Ever-Living One who has no need of any living [being]."*

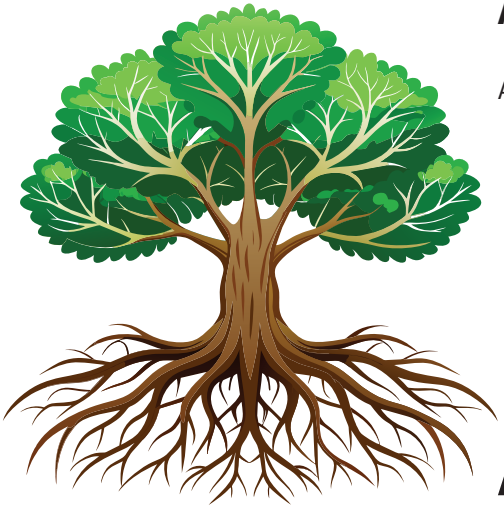
STOP AND REFLECT: What does the above *ḥadīth* mean in your own words?

Unlike human beings who are granted life, Allah ﷻ always possesses Life because it is essential to His Existence.

From Duʿāʾ Jawshan al-Kabīr:

"O Living One, prior to every living being;
O Living One, after every living being;
O Living One, like whom there is no living being;
O Living One, who has no partner who is a living being;
O Living One, who has no need of any living being;
O Living One, who causes every living being to die;
O Living One, who gives sustenance to every living being;
O Living One, who has not inherited life from any living being;
O Living One, who resurrects the dead;
O Living One, O All-Sustainer, whom neither drowsiness befalls on, nor sleep!

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ghāfir (40), Verse 65.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Furqān (25), Verse 58.



AL-QAYYŪM

Another important Attribute of Allah ﷻ which is related to *al-Ḥayy* is *al-Qayyūm*. The definition of this Attribute is that everything exists in a state of dependence on Allah ﷻ. Just like a human being needs a spine to remain upright and standing, all creatures are totally dependent on Allah ﷻ for their entire existence. They are dependent on Him in the sense of initially being given life, as well as in every second of their existence.

Activity 1.3b: Quick Write

Which important and famous *āyah* of the Qurʾān contains these two Attributes of Allah ﷻ, namely *al-Ḥayy* and *al-Qayyūm*? Why do you think these two Attributes are the first ones mentioned in this verse?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

A very important *dhikr* [remembrance of Allah ﷻ] is the following:

Yā Ḥayyu – Yā Qayyūm

Reciting these words frequently will continuously remind us that we are always dependent on Allah ﷻ for our entire life and existence.

Take some time to think about moments in your daily life where reciting this *dhikr* might help you.

Discuss these moments with a partner. From your discussion, be prepared to share at least 2-3 suggestions with the class.

Once each pair has shared their thoughts with the class, make a little note card for yourself reminding you about this *dhikr,* and some important times that you can recite it. You can decorate the note card as you wish, and keep it in a place that will help you the most.

Activity 1.3c: Review Questions

1. Compare and contrast the different meanings of *al-Ḥakīm*.

2. Compare and contrast the different meanings of *al-Ḥayy*.

3. In some verses of the Qurʾān where Allah ﷻ describes a law of the religion (for example, Verse 240 of Sūrah al-Baqarah), He ends the *āyah* by describing Himself as *Ḥakīm*. What meaning(s) of *ḥikmah* would best suit such a verse?

4. In some verses of the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ describes Himself as being the One who gives life and causes death (for example, Verse 158 of Sūrah al-Aʿrāf). What meaning of *Ḥayāt* is being described in such an verse?

CHAPTER 2

Proving Prophethood

2.1 Prophethood (Nubuwwah)
2.2 Prophetic Miracles and Characteristics
2.3 Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Qurʾān
2.4 Protection of the Qur’ān

2.1 Prophethood (Nubuwwah)

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand why Allah ﷻ sent us Prophets ﷺ to help us in life, and how this is another sign of how just He is.
- Correlate our need for Allah's guidance to our limited knowledge.
- Articulate reasons why Allah ﷻ sent Prophets ﷺ for our guidance.

As you may recall from previous years, Jordan was an atheist who happened to meet a Muslim on his school campus, and the two struck up a meaningful conversation. Jordan has now reached an understanding of the first principle of faith, which is in regard to the belief of Allah ﷻ and His Oneness. In the 10th grade, we will continue to participate in this ongoing discussion as Jordan learns about the other principles of faith.

JORDAN: I now understand the need for investigating religion. I am also convinced of the existence of God, and I understand that God is One, the ONLY One who provides my existence, and the One whom I need to worship. I also comprehend that God is Just, despite the presence of evil and suffering around the world.

The next question I have is: what do I do next? Why did God create me? What does He want from me?

STOP AND REFLECT: How would you answer these questions? What is our purpose in life?

ME (THE MUSLIM): God sent Prophets ﷺ to guide humanity on how to lead one's life. Prophets ﷺ teach us what choices we need to make, what things we should perform, and what things we should refrain from. They also taught us that the goal of life is to attain perfection through the worship of One God.

JORDAN: Why did God have to send Prophets?

ME: It is very simple! Suppose that God expects us to lead a life of serving and worshiping Him, but He did not guide us on how to meet those expectations. That would be so unjust! But we have already proven that God is Just and Fair. Therefore, He must guide us to what we need to do, or not do, and He does this through Prophets ﷺ.

JORDAN: But why does God even need to guide us? Why can we not figure out on our own what to do with our lives? We do not really need a Prophet to come and tell us what to do—we are pretty smart ourselves! Especially if we all come together and think hard enough—we can figure out what to do!

Activity 2.1a: Scenarios - Imagine that!

Consider the following scenarios, and reflect on how guidance in each situation would have led to greater success.

a. Imagine your parents allow you to babysit your siblings for the first time ever. They say that they will pay you for it if you do a good job, and then they both leave. They did not tell you what it means to do a good job, or the things that you have to do. Naturally, you and your siblings spend the whole time having fun, but you forget to give them dinner, instead you indulge in some junk food, and they stay up way past their bedtime. Your parents come home quite late, and see that the house is a mess, and everyone is still awake! They are not happy at all about what they witness!

How could some guidance from the parents have helped this situation immensely?

b. You finally get your first new phone. You are beyond excited, and open the package hastily. You take out the phone and attempt to power it on, but with no luck at all. Feeling frantic, you now attempt to look for the set-up guide and realize that there is none. What will you do next?

Did your answer include looking for some form of guidance? Why were you not able to solve this problem on your own?

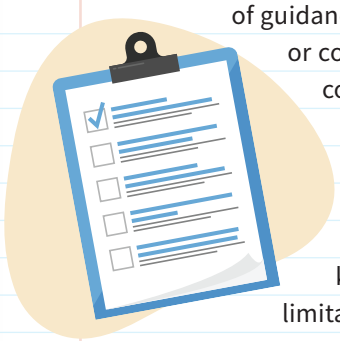
Activity 2.1a: Scenarios - Imagine that! (Continued)

c. You are in Science class at the end of the day, and are very anxious for the bell to ring. Five minutes before the bell rings, your teacher announces that you all have a group project to do which is due next week, about sourcing sustainable forms of energy for your school. However, before she can give any more details about it, the bell rings and class ends. You come back a week later with a project that you and your group feel truly captures the essence of the topic; but then you find out that it is lacking in many components the teacher says she expected to be in it.

Was there any way to complete this project to the teacher's expectations without any prior guidance? Why or why not?

How do the above scenarios help us better understand why Allah ﷻ had to send Prophets ﷺ to guide humanity instead of leaving them to figure it out all on their own?

ME: It is true that human beings can figure out—to a limited extent—some things. There are certain things we may be able to figure out on our own. However, often even the things we do know in this world are usually through some sort of guidance or another. Something as simple as setting up your new phone or coffee machine requires a set-up guide. Using a particular machine correctly requires us to refer to a manual.



However, can a human being ever know everything? After all, knowing things is not just limited to this world. There are things which are beyond this material world to know as well. The knowledge of human beings is relative and confined to their own limitations.

One example of our limited knowledge is that we do not know what will happen after death, and the few things we do know are whatever Allah ﷻ has chosen to share with us. Another example is understanding the real consequences of our actions. Yes, there are some actions that are clearly wrong, like stealing or lying. But what about listening to music? Other examples where without guidance from Allah ﷻ, we would not know what to do include: assisted suicide, backbiting, having pork, eating cockroaches, etc.

Also, even when it comes to those things that we can figure out on our own, we are still in need of guidance from Allah ﷻ in order to do those things in a perfect way. Take establishing a government, for example. Throughout history, human beings have struggled to find a form of government that is fair. Only with the guidance of Allah ﷻ through His Prophets ﷺ were people ever able to establish a just government.

In the end, we all agree that we have just one chance at life. All of us want to live in a way that will bring us the most success in this world and the next. Thus, we can either:

- Take a chance and try to figure it out for ourselves (trial and error); however, this is quite risky as our time on earth is very limited, and we may not end up finding the right way.
- Or we can follow an ordinary person's advice and guidelines; however, this person may make a mistake and lead us down a wrong path.
- Or we can follow the guidelines set out by the One who created us, (Allah ﷻ); guidelines which He sent via His Prophets ﷺ. In this way, we are assured that we will be following the best way to bring us success in both this world and the next.

JORDAN: Do you mean to say that we have to follow things that we cannot understand for ourselves? How can anyone be forced to follow something they cannot even understand? That is injustice!

ME: What is unjust is to be expected to follow something that cannot make sense because it is illogical, for example, 2+2=5. But just because we do not understand something, it does not mean that it does not make sense. For example, we might not comprehend the wisdom behind why we have to fast longer hours in summer than in winter; or why backbiting is wrong.

In other words, there are things that:

a) We cannot accept because they are illogical, like 2+2=5.

b) We do accept because they make sense to us, like 2+2=4.

c) May not make sense to us, but are not necessarily illogical. We just do not understand them because of the lack of our own limited knowledge. Thus, we should not reject those things just because we do not understand them.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some things that you accept simply because they make sense, religiously? What about things that are not illogical, but we lack knowledge of them?

WHY DO WE NEED PROPHETS?

https://www.al-islam.org/kids-corner/why-do-we-need-prophets-prophethood-lesson-1

The process of how we identify Prophets ﷺ who teach us what we cannot understand for ourselves has to make sense to us. Once we have identified them though, we might not understand the 'why' behind everything they tell us.

Let us watch the following video, then have a brief discussion about it to further understand the concept of Prophethood.

JORDAN: Okay, now I understand the need for guidance from God. But…why Prophets who are human beings? Why did He not guide us through angels, animals, objects…or even directly through dreams or inspiration?

ME: As for why God sent Prophets ﷺ in the form of human beings, the reason is because:

a) God is Perfect, and most human beings—even though they are capable of arriving at perfection—are imperfect. In order for a human being to have the ability to talk to God directly, they need to have some level of perfection. The only individuals who reached that level of perfection were the Prophets ﷺ, the 12 Imāms ﷺ, and those who are at the highest level of the followers of Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ. All others need a channel by which they can receive God's guidance.

b) Human beings need role models who can show them what they need to do, or refrain from, not just tell them. Humans learn by example much more than they learn through teachings. A tree, a bird, or even an angel would not be useful to teach a human being what to do as they would not be able to practically show them anything. On the Day of Judgment, human beings could complain to God saying: "You made us in a way that we learn through seeing, not just hearing about what is right and what is wrong, so why did You not send us an example of someone whom we could have followed?" The Prophets ﷺ were perfect examples of people who acted upon the teachings that they preached.

c) Part of the test that Allah ﷻ has created for human beings is to have them obey another human being. There were a lot of people in the past history of the Prophets ﷺ who believed in God, but they had a problem with following a Prophet of God. Their lineage, possessions, or tribal affiliations and customs prevented them from following someone whom they felt was at a lower status. Sometimes, they (falsely) claimed that they would have believed if an angel had been sent as a Prophet. This, however, was either an excuse to not believe, or an excuse to avoid the challenge of listening to the message of the Prophets ﷺ and accepting it with their minds and hearts. Following another human being teaches us to be humble, especially if that was the command of God Almighty.

STOP AND REFLECT: What complaints would we have if we were not blessed with Prophets ﷺ who practiced what they preached? How can following another human being teach us to be humble?

Activity 2.1b: Review Questions

1. What are the fundamental questions that Jordan asked about Prophets ﷺ in this lesson? What are other questions about this subject that you think he will ask about next?

2. Why do we need Prophets ﷺ?

3. In your own words, state two objections that a person may face when trying to convince someone about the need for a Prophet ﷺ.

4. Look up Sūrah al-Muddaththir (74), Verse 52, in the Noble Qurʾān.

   a. Write out its translation.

   b. How do you think this verse is related to the objections that Jordan raised above?

5. Look up Sūrah al-Furqān (25), Verse 7, in the Noble Qurʾān.

   a. Write out its translation.

   b. How do you think this verse is related to the objections that Jordan raised above?

Activity 2.1c: Dialogue

1. Create a dialogue on how you would explain to a non-Muslim friend about why Allah ﷻ sending down Prophets ﷺ for guidance is an example of His Justice.

2. Along the same lines, create a dialogue on how you would explain the concept of Prophethood to your younger sibling.

2.2 Prophetic Miracles and Characteristics

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify characteristics of the Prophets ﷺ.
- Explain the miraculous abilities of the Prophets ﷺ given to them by Allah ﷻ.
- Articulate why the Prophets ﷺ have to be immaculate in order to be effective role models for humankind.

JORDAN: I now understand that God must send guidance in the form of a human being. But how does a person know which human being has been sent by God? There have been a lot of people in history, including at the present, who say that they are representatives of God, so how can one know who is actually a true Prophet sent by God?

ME: There are three ways of reaching certainty that a person is actually a Prophet ﷺ of God:

1. Through a Prophetic miracle *(muʿjizah).* A *muʿjizah* is an act that a Prophet ﷺ will perform, or something that he is given which has three qualities:

a) It goes beyond the normal system of cause and effect. An example of this is the magic show that Pharaoh's magicians put on in front of the people in order to defeat Prophet Mūsā ﷺ. Their performance was magnificent, but anyone who was very skilled in magic and had sleight of hand could have put on something similar. But when they saw what Prophet Mūsā ﷺ did with his staff (and how it became a real serpent that ate up their tricks), they realized that even the most skilled magician could never replicate this feat.

b) It comes along with a challenge to see if anyone can replicate it. This challenge is called *'taḥaddī'* (تحدّي) in Arabic. An example of this is the Noble Qurʾān, which challenges those who disbelieve in the final Prophet ﷺ to come up with a book, or even a chapter, like it.

c) It comes along with a claim to Prophethood. Other people, like the 12 Imāms ﷺ, and in some cases, pure individuals are also given extraordinary abilities, but they do not claim that they are a Prophet ﷺ, nor are their miraculous acts typically referred to as *muʿjizahs*.

2. Through knowing the person's characteristics. By coming to know the type of person a Prophet ﷺ is, some people are able to ascertain that this person would never tell a lie. A Prophet ﷺ is trustworthy, honest, and of good character. Therefore, if through their noble and righteous qualities, he says that he is a Prophet ﷺ, then he is a Prophet ﷺ.

3. Through the foretelling of a previous Prophet ﷺ. There were times when the previous Prophets ﷺ—before they left this world—would tell the people who is going to succeed them. Also, many of the Prophets ﷺ would give people glad tidings about the eventual coming of the final Prophet ﷺ, along with a description of some of his characteristics.

JORDAN: Did all Prophets have the same miraculous abilities?

ME: Miracles were given to Prophets ﷺ according to what was the most prominent body of knowledge, skill, or art at that time. For example, at the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, words and poetry were very important, thus the miracle given to him was the Qurʾān, which was so eloquent and way out did any poetry that anyone could have ever written. At the time of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, medicine was quite significant; thus his miracle was that he could cure the fatally ill, and even bring back the dead to life. At the time of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ, people were very impressed by magic; thus his miracle was to outdo even the best magician. Therefore, Allah ﷻ sent His Prophets ﷺ with certain abilities to challenge the most prominent issues during their eras.

JORDAN: What were some of the common characteristics that could be found in all Prophets?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Before reading any further, make a list of what you believe were common characteristics found in all of the Prophets ﷺ.

-
-
-
-
-
-

Why do you think these were the most common characteristics in all the Prophets ﷺ?

Is there one characteristic that was mentioned the most? Or perhaps certain characteristics that can be grouped together? Why do you think that is? Discuss it with a partner.

ME: One of the most common characteristics that was prevalent in all of the Prophets ﷺ is known as *ʿiṣmah.* Literally, *ʿiṣmah* means 'protection,' and one who has the characteristic of *ʿiṣmah* is referred to as *maʿṣūm*, which literally means 'one who is protected.' In the context of Islamic terminology, this term *maʿṣūm* is often translated as 'infallible,' however, a more precise translation would be 'impeccable, free from sins, or immaculate.'

How were the Prophets ﷺ immaculate?

a) The Prophets ﷺ never made a mistake, especially when they were conveying any revelation of Allah ﷻ; or else that would have brought about a question regarding the Justice of Allah ﷻ in that why would He send a Prophet ﷺ to convey His Message when that Prophet ﷺ might have made a mistake? In that case, he would have conveyed something other than Allah's message, which would defeat the purpose of sending him. But Allah ﷻ is Just and does everything according to wisdom.

b) The Prophets ﷺ never made any errors when showing people how to do things, meaning that they would not commit any sins. Otherwise, we would not be able to take the Prophets ﷺ as role models, which cannot be the case because one of the reasons why Allah ﷻ sent a Prophet ﷺ was so that they could be a role model and teacher for us. We are supposed to learn not only from what the Prophet ﷺ said, but also what the Prophet ﷺ did.

JORDAN: I was doing some research about the Prophets, and I came across some stories of them in the Qurʾān that seem to show that the Prophets committed sins. How can we understand those stories?

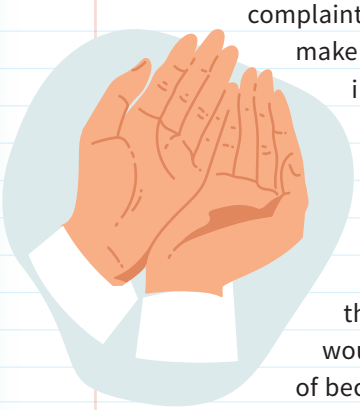
Inerrant and infallible usually mean that 'someone is unable or incapable of committing a sin.' This is not a correct translation or meaning of *ʿiṣmah* because *ʿiṣmah* means that the Prophets ﷺ chose not to commit sins, even though they were potentially capable of sinning. Therefore, terms like impeccable or immaculate are more accurate translations.

Activity: Define the term!

In the dictionary 'infallible' is defined as "incapable of making mistakes or being wrong." Based on this definition, why is this not the best term to describe the Prophets ﷺ?

ME: The Qurʾān sometimes mentions the Prophets ﷺ repenting for actions or decisions that they took. One such example is Prophet Ādam ﷺ who repented after approaching a tree that he was told not to go near. However, at that time, he was in a world where there were no laws because it was not a limited world. When he chose to eat from that tree, it was not the best of options. Right away, he realized his shortcoming, and sought forgiveness, but it was not forgiveness from a sin, rather a desire to become closer to Allah ﷻ.

Another example is Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ who repented after hearing the complaint of one of two disputants, and was moved by his sense of justice to make a judgment without hearing out the other side. Thus, he was haste in making a decision, but quickly felt remorse and repented to the Almighty.



Prophet Yūnus ﷺ was upset that his people were not accepting Allah's guidance. He prematurely left them before receiving Allah's instructions to do so. In all these cases, the 'repentance' they performed is different from the type of repentance somebody would normally perform after committing a sin. It was rather a way of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ. Their action is called *Tarkul Awlā* (leaving aside the best option, and choosing a less preferable option), however, they were not sins. The Prophets ﷺ never disobeyed a mandatory rule of Allah ﷻ.

It is also important to note that while the Old Testament and the Bible relate stories of Prophets ﷺ committing sins or doing immoral things, these stories are completely rejected in Islam and we firmly believe that they are not true, and since the Prophets ﷺ were immaculate they did not commit any sins whatsoever.

JORDAN: Is *ʿiṣmah* a special gift of God that they are born with? Why would God choose to give this to some people and not others? Is that fair?

ME: *ʿIṣmah* is of two types: One is a special type that was gifted by Allah ﷻ to the Prophets ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ when they were born. The second type is one that others can earn through consistently performing good actions and staying away from evil deeds. For example, if a person never drinks alcohol, then they become 'free from the sin' of drinking intoxicants that are not permitted by God.

JORDAN: But how can it be fair for God to give such a blessing to someone when they are born? I would not mind having been born *maʿṣūm*!

STOP AND REFLECT: Why did Allah ﷻ not make everyone immaculate *(maʿṣūm)*? Based on this, what do you think Allah ﷻ has chosen our purpose in life to be?

ME: I understand that it might seem unfair, but think about it. Allah ﷻ cannot be compared to His creations. He knows things that we can never know. He knows what a Prophet ﷺ will do in the future, and based on that, He chooses him to receive *ʿiṣmah* as a special gift. The mission that the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ had to fulfill was so great that this was a necessary tool for them to complete their tasks. Allah ﷻ knew that they would use this ability to its fullest extent to complete these extremely difficult missions.

In other words, we can say that the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ were in fact chosen based on merit. However, because Allah ﷻ has knowledge of the future, and time is not a factor for Him, it is a type of merit based on future actions and choices, rather than ones that occurred in the past. Allah ﷻ knew that the community would need an impeccable guide from the beginning, and He knew that these guides would reach that level, so He bestowed them with the gift of *ʿiṣmah* from the very beginning.

JORDAN: How does *ʿiṣmah* work? Does a *maʿṣūm* just 'lose the ability' to perform a sin?

ME: *ʿIṣmah* is when a Prophet ﷺ **DOES NOT** commit a sin. It does not mean that a Prophet ﷺ **CANNOT** commit a sin. Prophets ﷺ have the capability of sinning, but they choose not to. Why not, one may ask? Due to the deep knowledge *(maʿrifah)* and strong will that they possess. The secret behind such knowledge and immaculateness of the Prophets ﷺ is their direct vision and intuition of reality, their perfect faith, and their deep love for Allah ﷻ. Since they are so profound in their awareness of Allah's mercy and the realization of His Attributes, they have gained such knowledge that they have reached a level where they do not even think about sins, let alone actually performing a sin. In addition, they are aware of the rewards earned through obedience to Allah ﷻ, and the punishments incurred through disobeying Him; thus, the abundance of knowledge further enables a Prophet ﷺ to not sin.

Let us look at a simple example. When children reach an age where they understand a bit about what is right and what is wrong, they will never drink a glass of poisoned water. Not only would they not drink it, but they would not even think about drinking it. Their knowledge prevents them from doing so. Without that knowledge, they might see the glass of water as just an ordinary glass of water, and drink it if they are thirsty; but then of course, they would have to face the consequences of their actions.

A Prophet ﷺ has full knowledge of the reality behind sins. With that awareness, they will never commit a sin; in fact, they will not even think about it, even though they are able to commit that particular sin.

Activity 2.2a: Imagine That!

This lesson defines the concept of *ʿiṣmah* as when a Prophet ﷺ is able to commit a sin, however they do not commit it due to knowing the repercussions of it.

Use the following real-life examples to help explain why it is so important to have Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ who do not sin on their own accord.

a. Your teacher asks you to keep an organized workspace so that you may find your supplies easier, and allow for a more cohesive learning experience in the classroom. You and your peers come in and are ready to learn; however, your teacher has not followed one's own advice and is not able to start the lesson in a timely manner due to much chaos and disorganization in their workspace. Would this make you inclined to listen to your teacher in keeping your space organized? Why or why not?

b. Your parents ask you to babysit your younger sibling for a bit. Your sibling likes to watch your every move and tries to copy you in everything. You know that you are not supposed to watch TV with them around, but there is a very important game that you cannot miss. You turn it on by justifying that it is a once-in-a-while occurrence even though you have not asked your parents for permission. What is this action teaching your younger sibling through observation?

Activity 2.2a: Imagine That! (Continued)

c. What is another example of teaching through action? Explain below.

d. How do these scenarios help solidify the concept that the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ must not sin so that they can be impeccable role models for us? What objections would we be able to create if they were not immaculate?

Activity 2.2b: Review Questions

1. Did the Prophets ﷺ earn *ʿiṣmah,* or were they just given it?

2. How can it be fair for Prophets ﷺ to be given *ʿiṣmah* while other ordinary people have to live life without *ʿiṣmah*?

3. Look up the following verses and list what they describe regarding the difficulty of the missions of the Prophets ﷺ:

   a. Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verses 9-13

b. Sūrah al-Muzzammil (73), Verse 5

4. What is the reason why the Prophets ﷺ stayed away from sins?

5. What is a '*muʿjizah*' and what are its three defining characteristics?

2.3 Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Qurʾān

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

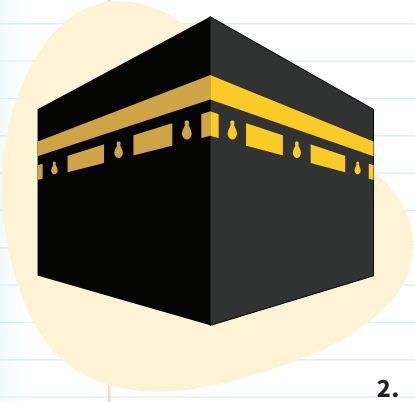
- Identify some characteristics to identify a Prophet ﷺ versus a non-Prophet.
- Explain how the Prophethood of the final Messenger, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, is an undeniable fact.
- Establish why the Qurʾān is a miracle.
- Provide proof how to know that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the seal of the Prophets.

JORDAN: Okay…you convinced me about the need for Prophets, their roles, their qualities, and how to differentiate between a Prophet and a non-Prophet…So now tell me, who were the Prophets?

ME: Let us review how to tell a Prophet ﷺ from a non-Prophet. There were three ways:

1. Looking at their lives, qualities, and characteristics.
2. Looking at the predictions of previous Prophets ﷺ about subsequent ones.
3. Looking at their miracles *(muʿjizahs)*.

In history, the last Prophet was Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. We can establish that he was a Prophet through all three of the above ways.



1. **Personal traits:** For 40 years, he lived with the people and became famous among them as being *aṣ-Ṣādiq* (the Truthful one) and *al-Amīn* (the Trustworthy one). Examples of his truthfulness and trustworthiness include:
   - When he invited the people to Islam, he asked them if they would believe him if he told them that an army was advancing toward them, and they should prepare against the danger.
   - He was able to resolve a dispute about who would place the Black Stone back onto the Kaʿbah.
   - He had such amazing characteristics—that even his enemies testified to—despite growing up in a society which had the worst of morals.
   - He managed to establish a pact of justice in Mecca even before spreading Islam.
2. All the Prophets ﷺ of the past gave glad tidings about the coming of the final Prophet ﷺ. There were Christians and Jews who were waiting for the last Messenger ﷺ to come, and many of them recognized him from the signs that were present in their books. Some of them had actually moved to Yathrib (the city that became known as Medina) in anticipation of the Prophet ﷺ coming there. Some became Muslims upon meeting the Prophet ﷺ, or hearing about him. Others refused to accept him due to their own prejudice and attachment to this lowly world *(dunyā)*.

3. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ performed many miracles during his lifetime. However, the Prophetic miracle which was the most noteworthy and everlasting one was the Noble Qurʾān. Let us analyze, and take a deeper look at why the Qurʾān is a miracle.

JORDAN: Before you do so, I have a question. What about the other Prophets? Should we not prove that they were Prophets first, and then discuss why the last Prophet was a Prophet?

ME: The approach we are taking is to first show that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was a Prophet; and how he told us about the Prophethood of the other Prophets ﷺ so we can accept them as well. We do not need to independently look at how they were all Prophets ﷺ as well.

STOP AND REFLECT: In your own words, why does looking at the Prophethood of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ help us establish the validity of all the other Prophets ﷺ?

WHY THE QURʾĀN IS A MIRACLE

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why do you think the Qurʾān is a miracle? What specific characteristics or qualities make it a miracle? With a partner, take turns sharing your reflections and hearing each other's ideas. Were they vastly different? What did your thoughts have in common? Choose three attributes to share with the class.

JORDAN: Why is the Qurʾān a miracle?

ME: There are several different reasons why the Qurʾān is a miracle, some of which include the following:

1. ELOQUENCE OF THE QURʾĀN

Speech is eloquent when beautiful words are chosen to present a concept, and especially when those words are made use of in a way to convey the concept in the best manner. Anyone who studies the Arabic language will admit that the Qurʾān has a profound level of eloquence. It is not prose or poetry, but rather, the Qurʾān has its own, unique style. It even comes with a challenge for imitation, and that challenge has never and will never be met or accomplished.

Some scholars say that the challenge of the Qurʾān for *taḥaddī* (challenge for imitation) came in different stages. First, Allah ﷻ challenged people to bring an entire Qurʾān like this one. Then, He told them to bring ten chapters like ten chapters of the Qurʾān. He further 'simplified' the challenge by telling people to bring one chapter like a chapter of the Qurʾān. He also gave the permissibility for individuals to bring all the help possible to come up with something like the Qurʾān, including all people and *Jinn*, everyone and everything besides Allah ﷻ.

If the enemies of Islam (until today) want to challenge Islam and show that the Prophet ﷺ is a liar, then all they have to do is produce a work of literature that matches even a portion of the Qurʾān.

Walīd ibn Mughayrah from the Banī Makhzūm, was famous at the time of the Prophet ﷺ among the Arabs for his literary abilities. The enemies of Islam asked him to think about the challenge, and give his opinion about the miraculous verses of the Qurʾān and its extraordinary influence.

Walīd asked Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to recite a verse of the Qurʾān for him. The Prophet ﷺ recited a verse from Sūrah as-Sajdah. This verse caused such an internal spark in Walīd that he, without thinking, arose from his place and left the gathering of the Banī Makhzūm, saying: "I swear by God that I have heard words from Muḥammad which neither resemble the words of human beings, nor the fairies. His words have a special tone and a particular beauty. They are like a branch of a tree which bears a great deal of fruit; they are words which will be victorious over all things, and nothing can be victorious over them." These words caused the Quraysh to whisper amongst themselves: "Walīd has lost his heart to Muḥammad."

Abū Jahl, in a state of anxiety, went to Walīd's home and told him what the Quraysh were saying. He invited him to a meeting of the Quraysh leaders. Walīd went to them and said: "Do you really think Muḥammad is insane? Have you seen any traces of insanity in him?" Those who were present said: "No. Then he continued: "Do you think that he is a liar? Is he not famous among us for his truthfulness and trustworthiness?" Some of the leaders of the Quraysh then asked: "So then what should we call him?" Walīd thought for a while, then replied: "He is a magician."

Labeling the Prophet ﷺ as a magician was another proof of the extraordinary attraction of the Qurʾān.[1]

1 Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, *Fifty Lessons on the Principles of Belief for the Youth*, Lesson 25.

After almost a century had passed from the revelation of the Qurʾān—Ibn Abī al-ʿAwjāʾ, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Abū Shākir al-Daysāni, and ʿAbdul Mālik al-Baṣrī—decided to take up the challenge of the Qurʾān. They worked for about a year and a half, but failed to accomplish anything remotely resembling such eloquent beauty. One day, while they were meeting to discuss their work in *Masjid al-Ḥarām,* Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ walked by and recited the following verse:

"Say: 'If all of humankind and the jinn gather to bring the like of this Qurʾān, they will not be able to bring the like of it, even if they assisted one another.'"[2]

Fourteen centuries have passed, and the enemies of Islam still have not been able to meet the challenge to reproduce something like it.

2. THE "HIDDEN" KNOWLEDGE CONTAINED IN THE QURʾĀN

Sometimes the Qurʾān makes reference to secrets of nature that were completely unknown at the time, and people only realized how profound they were much later on (some of them perhaps are still yet to be discovered). Examples include: the meeting of saltwater and freshwater, and how the two of them do not mix;[3] the stages of development of a clot to an embryo to a fetus;[4] the movement of the sun and the moon in their own orbits;[5] the fertilization of plants through winds;[6] and mentioning certain foods like the fig and olive[7] that we now know have special medical benefits. The Qurʾān could not have been written by a human being because human beings did not have access to such knowledge in that period of time.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 88.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raḥmān (55), Verses 19-20.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verses 12-14.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yāsīn (36), Verses 38-40.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15), Verse 22.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tīn (95), Verse 1.

Activity 2.3a: “Hidden” Knowledge

PART A:

Quote three Qurʾānic verses that present an open challenge for all to come up with a Qurʾān, some Sūrahs, or a Sūrah like the Qurʾān.

See Sūrah aṭ-Ṭūr (52), Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Sūrah Hūd (11), and/or Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), for examples.

Verse 1:

Verse 2:

Verse 3:

PART B:

The above section mentioned several verses that are examples of certain knowledge which science has come to prove over time.

Choose two of the verses listed above and write their translations below.

Verse 1:

Verse 2:

PART C:

Pick one of these references to research what is the current scientific findings on this issue. What does science say about it? Provide a brief explanation in your own words.

3. PROFUNDITY/DEPTH OF ITS CONTENTS

The Qurʾān was revealed in a society which was completely in the dark. People would fight senseless wars, there was no education, women were treated like animals, there was a system of aristocracy, slavery was rampant, and people used to eat the worst type of foods, and they believed in superstition.

The Qurʾān introduced concepts that were never talked about or even thought about at that time, such as the superiority of *taqwā* (God-consciousness) and *ʿilm* (knowledge); the concept of *infāq* (giving in charity); *amr bil maʿrūf* (enjoining the good) and *nahy ʿanil munkar* (forbidding the evil); the equality of women and men in the spiritual world; fair division of responsibilities between a husband and a wife in this world; profound teachings about the concept of *Tawḥīd* (Monotheism) of Allah ﷻ; guidelines for conducting fair business; prohibition of murder and suicide; and so much more.

4. PROPHECIES

In a number of verses, the Qurʾān confidently predicted future events that eventually took place. Some examples (at least according to various interpretations) include:

- The victory of the Romans over the Persians in less than 10 years.[8]
- The Muslims would perform *ʿUmrah* without any harm and conquer Mecca.[9]
- The Prophet ﷺ would have many descendants, even though most of his children died at a very young age and only one daughter lived; and his enemies would be the ones who will have no descendants remain alive.[10]
- The Prophet ﷺ would return to his birthplace, meaning Mecca.[11]
- People would join Islam in great numbers during the Prophet's lifetime.[12]

There is no way that any human author could have been so bold to predict all these events with confidence, because if any of them were to not take place, then their entire work would have fallen into question.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verses 3-6.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 27.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kawthar (108), Verses 1-3.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 85.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Naṣr (110), Verses 1-2.

5. CONSISTENCY AND INTEGRITY OF THE QUR'ĀN

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

أَ فَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْءَانَ وَ لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيرِ الله لوجَدُواْ فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

"Do they not contemplate (upon) the Qur'ān? Had it been from [someone] other than Allah, they would have surely found much discrepancy (contradiction) in it."[13]

The Qur'ān was revealed over a period of 23 years during the Prophet's mission in various different circumstances, such as in times of: war, peace, victory, hardship, on the road, at home, etc. It speaks about so many important matters, such as: social issues, spirituality, human behavior, rules and legislation, science, economy, the plant and animal kingdom, family life, Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*, Prophets ﷺ, the Hereafter, the solar system, etc.

If the Qur'ān were from other than Allah ﷻ, then it would have contained discrepancies and contradictions because:

- A human author cannot normally maintain a high level of excellence when writing something consistently from beginning to end, especially over a long period of time, let alone at the level of excellence which could be considered a miracle *(mu'jizah)*.
- A human author cannot be an expert in so many different fields all at once.
- A human author's information increases over time, and this would be reflected in one's writing.
- A human author is affected by one's emotions and what is going on around them to a great extent. For example, certain times during the final Prophet's mission, the Muslims were being severely persecuted by the enemies, and they were in a minority. At other times, they were in a majority and had nearly taken over the entire Arabian Peninsula. Yet the way the Qur'ān addresses people of other religions, and the reminder about the need of Allah ﷻ and trust in Him in order to be victorious, is the same throughout.

THE MIRACLE ASPECTS OF THE QURAN

https://www.al-islam.org/kids-corner/miracle-aspects-quran-prophethood-lesson-8

13 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nisā' (4), Verse 82.

Activity 2.3b: Case in Point!

Reflect on the following examples in relation to the point that the Noble Qurʾān addresses issues in a way that is not affected by human emotions.

1. Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5) was revealed toward the very end of the life of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. After over 20 years of severe persecution by the polytheists, the Muslims now had the upper hand and were able to do whatever they wanted. We see throughout history that people often use such opportunities to take revenge and make the most of having an upper hand. However, this did not occur in the case of the Muslim community during the time of the final Messenger ﷺ because the Noble Qurʾān continued to remind them to establish justice, and be fair and kind, no matter what the situation. It also reminded them about the previous blessings of Allah ﷻ in protecting them from the powerful enemies.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ. وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ. وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ۝

"O you who believe! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of people incite you to not act equitably, (therefore) be just—that is nearer to righteousness; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward. But (as for) those who disbelieve and reject our communications, these are the companions of the Fire. O you who believe, remember the favors of Allah upon you when people had determined to stretch forth their hands toward you (in aggression), but He withheld their hands from you; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and on Allah let the believers rely."[14]

If the Muslims had handled the above situation/scenario with human emotions rather than listening to the words of Allah ﷻ, how might the situation have been different? Compare it with another historical reference in which human emotion was involved.

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verses 8-11.

2. In Sūrah Luqmān (31), Allah ﷻ gives instructions to young Muslims who enter Islam, but their parents reject it. Often these parents are very harsh toward their children due to their faith in Islam and sometimes even try to harm them. This could lead to very strong emotions in the children. Some would want to obey their parents even if it was against the teachings of Islam, while others would feel great anger toward their parents, and may even want to break all relations with them. However, we see that the Qurʾān gives balanced and wise advice, free from emotional extremes.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ. وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۖ صَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا ۖ وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ۝

"And We have enjoined upon humans (in respect) of their parents—their mother bears them with faintings upon faintings, and their weaning takes two years. Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the (eventual) coming. And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, then do not obey them (in this), and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of the one who turns to Me (in repentance). Then to Me is your return, and will I inform you about what you used to do.'"[15]

What is the most significant aspect of this verse for you? Consider how you feel when your parents do not agree with you on something. Are these moments usually full of emotion? How does this verse express the importance of respect for parents even in the most emotional situations?

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verses 14-15.

6. THE PROPHET ﷺ BEING UNLETTERED/UNTAUGHT

وَ إِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ **مِّن مِّثْلِهِ** وَ ادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"And if you are in doubt concerning what We have sent down (the Qurʾān) to Our servant (the final Prophet), then bring a sūrah like it, and invoke your helpers besides Allah, if you are truthful." [16]

Some understand the expression of *"min mithilihi"* in the verse above to mean "bring it from someone like the Prophet ﷺ"—someone who is untaught, never went to school, never recited any poetry, never wrote anything down before Prophethood. Allah ﷻ refers to this in the following verse:

"And You did not recite any Scripture before it, nor did you write it with your right hand, for then those who want to falsify would have been skeptical." [17]

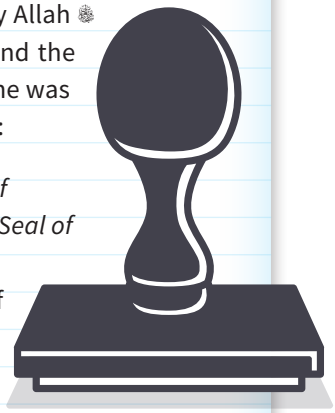
In order for a human being to be able to compose an original work, they must first be taught how to do this. The Prophet ﷺ however, was never taught, nor was he ever seen to be studying the books of others, or writing anything himself.

16 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 23.
17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 48.

SEAL OF THE PROPHETS

JORDAN: How do I know that Prophet Muḥammad was the last of the Prophets?

ME: According to traditions, there were 124,000 Prophets sent by Allah ﷻ to guide humankind. The first one was Prophet Ādam ؑ, and the last one was Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. How do we know that he was the last one of them? There are several reasons to prove this:



1. The Qurʾān clearly states: *"Muḥammad is not the father of anyone among you, but he is the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets."*[18] The word used in this verse for "Seal" is *"Khātam."* Back in those days, the Arabs would end all of their letters with a seal or stamp using their ring. This would mark the end of that letter. Similarly, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ marked the end of all the Prophets ؑ.
2. Many traditions refer to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ being the last of the Prophets ؑ. In a famous tradition reported in both Shīʿah and Ahlus Sunnah sources, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ tells Imām ʿAlī ؑ that: *"You are to me as Hārūn was to Mūsāʾ, except that there is no Prophet after me."*[19]
3. The religion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—Islam—is a perfect and complete system of guidance for all human beings until the end of time, thus, there is no need for a new Prophet to come, nor for any new religion, or for any other book to be sent down. Allah ﷻ did appoint individuals to protect the religion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in order to preserve its teachings, and prevent it from being tampered with, but those individuals are the 12 Imāms ؑ, not Prophets.
4. Some things are so clear that we do not need proof for them; for example, during the daytime, no one asks the question: "Why is it daytime?" since the answer is so clear. Similarly, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ being the last of the Prophets ؑ is so clear to all Muslims that there must be truth to it.

18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 40.

19 Bukhārī, Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* The Chapter on the Virtues of the Companions, The Chapter on the Virtues of ʿAlī , Vol. 3, P. 23; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* The Chapter on the Virtues of ʿAlī, Vol. 15, Pp. 183-185.

Activity 2.3c: Review Questions

1. What are three ways of knowing that a Prophet is really a Prophet?

2. How do we know that Prophet Muḥammad (s) was a Prophet?

NAHJ AL BALĀGHAH SERMON 26

http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-26-verily-allah-sent-Muḥammad-s

3. What are some of the characteristics of the people in the Arabian Peninsula prior to the coming of the final Prophet ﷺ that are mentioned in Sermon 26 of *Nahj al-Balāghah*?

4. In Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah (Chapter 60), Allah ﷻ instructs the believers in relation to their family members who rejected Islam. These family members had refused to migrate to Medina, and stayed back in Mecca. Some were passive toward Islam, while others were active enemies of this religion. In this Sūrah, Allah ﷻ commands the believers to treat those who had not fought them due to their religion with justice and goodness; but yet not to take the active enemies of Islam as guardians or confidantes. At a time that would have been very emotional for the Muslims, Allah ﷻ tells the Muslims that He has the Power, and the Mercy to in fact repair the relationships between the Muslims and their relatives who had now become their "enemies." He then sets out a clear criteria for establishing relations with the disbelievers. Read Verses 7-9 of this Sūrah and answer the following questions:

   a. Under what conditions can Muslims establish relationships with the disbelievers?

   b. According to this verse, for which disbelievers should friendly relationships be avoided?

2.4 Protection of the Qur'ān

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Prove how the Qurʾān is unaltered.
- Define *taḥrīf*.
- Explain why the Qurʾān being altered would mean that Islam as a whole could be corrupted.

PRESERVATION AND COLLECTION OF THE QURʾĀN

JORDAN: I am now convinced that Prophet Muhammad was the last Prophet, and that the Qurʾān is the Book of God, and that it is a miracle. But God revealed the Qurʾān to the Prophet around 1400 years ago! Technology was primitive at that time and almost every book from that time period was altered or destroyed. Other Scriptures or Books, like the Bible or the Torah, have been altered throughout time and have multiple versions. Is there any proof that the Qurʾān which is commonly read today is the exact same Qurʾān that was revealed to the Prophet all of those years ago?

ME: In Arabic, the word *taḥrīf* means 'distortion or change.' In any book, *taḥrīf* can take place in one or more of the following ways:

- By something being added to it
- By something being taken away from it, and/or
- By something being modified (meaning that something was taken away, and then something new was added in the same place).

In regard to the Noble Qurʾān, almost always, when the possibility of the Qurʾān being distorted is brought up, it is in relation to something being taken away or removed from it. All Muslims unanimously agree that nothing has been added to the Qurʾān, nor has it been modified in any way. Majority of them also agree that it has never been subject to any kind of *taḥrīf*—meaning that not even a single letter of it has been taken away or altered—from the time it was revealed until now.

Here are some of the arguments for why the Qurʾān has not been changed:

1. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

"Indeed, it is We who have sent down the Reminder (the Qurʾān), and indeed We will protect it (be its Guardian)." [1]

Based on this verse, nothing has been—or ever will be—added or subtracted from the Qurʾān because Allah ﷻ, who knows everything and is capable of everything, has taken on the responsibility of being its Guardian, and protecting the Qurʾān.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15), Verse 9.

2. The Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims who were alive during his time, and those who came after his time always put a lot of emphasis on memorizing and writing the verses of the Qurʾān. There have always been *'ḥāfizīn'* of the Qurʾān, which means 'people who have memorized the entire Qurʾān.' Some of them memorize it so well that they even know the number of letters in the Qurʾān, so they would never allow the Qurʾān to be changed. For example, when the third caliph wanted to omit the first letter of Sūrah at-Tawbah (Chapter 9), Verse 34, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb threatened to take out his sword.

STOP AND REFLECT: How does the presence of memorizers *(ḥāfizīn)* guarantee that the Qurʾān has not been corrupted?

3. The greatest of scholars of Islam from the past and present who have studied this matter in detail verify that the Qurʾān has not been altered.

4. A book which has been altered from its original form will have two different versions at some point in time. These versions will generate further versions, and soon it will be difficult to distinguish what is original, and what has been added, taken away, or modified. An example of such alteration is the Bible. Even though the Christian Old Testament (used by Christians), and the Hebrew Bible (used by Jews) are supposed to be the same text, over time they have become different from one another. The Qurʾān, on the other hand, does not have any different versions whatsoever. Therefore, the Qurʾān has not been altered at all.

5. Logically speaking:

   a) Islam is the final religion, so Allah ﷻ needs to protect it until the end of times.

   b) If the Qurʾān—which is the most important miracle of the Prophet ﷺ—was not protected from corruption, then we would not have been convinced that the Prophet ﷺ was a true Prophet, and is essence then, Islam would not have flourished either.

Why would we not be convinced that the Prophet ﷺ was a true Prophet if the Qurʾān had been altered? Some of the reasons include:

- If something could be added to the Qurʾān, then it would mean that it is capable of imitation, and it would therefore not be a miracle in itself.
- If something could be taken away from it, then it would mean that its order and arrangement would be disturbed, making it a book other than the original Qurʾān. However, the original Qurʾān is a miracle, not a different version of it.
- The Qurʾān has been guaranteed by Allah ﷻ to be protected from any kind of alterations *(taḥrīf)*.

6. Recently, some very old copies of the Qurʾān were discovered. For example, in July 2015, some pages of the Qurʾān were discovered in Birmingham, England, that were very likely written during the life of the Prophet ﷺ, or very soon afterward.[2]

2 Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (n.d.) *Birmingham Quran Manuscript*. Retrieved February 11, 2022, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birmingham_Quran_manuscript#

Activity 2.4a: Video Reflection

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM QURʾĀN MANUSCRIPT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-HDFiC2boQ

1. What was your initial reaction to this video?

2. In your own words, how does this recent discovery at the University of Birmingham support the claim that the Qurʾān has not been altered or corrupted in any way?

According to most of our expert scholars on the history of the Qurʾān, this Divine Revelation was compiled and collected **during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ under his direction**. He would make sure to teach the Muslims the revealed verses very carefully, and would check that they had memorized them accurately. He sent various representatives who had memorized the Qurʾān to different cities in order to teach people the Qurʾān the way it was revealed. In later years, after the departure of the Prophet ﷺ from this world, efforts were taken at various times in the Muslim community to make sure that all the copies of the Qurʾān were accurate. Whenever there was any confusion or disagreement, they would turn to Imām ʿAlī ؑ for help and clarification.

A very small minority of Muslims believe that there were some verses which were previously part of the Qurʾān, but have now been taken away. This is because they have understood some *ḥadīth* to mean that there was a verse in the Qurʾān which was previously there in the Qurʾān, but it has now been taken out. However, such an understanding is incorrect. Either they have misunderstood the *ḥadīth*—which were actually trying to give a meaning for the verse—or the *ḥadīth* needs to be rejected because of the proofs above.

The original Qurʾān was written without any vowels or marks, i.e. without dots, or signs for *fatḥah, kasrah, ḍammah, shaddah,* and *sukūn* (see the reference above of the Birmingham Manuscript). This led to some variations in the reading for different parts of the Muslim world, because some received copies of the text without correctly learning how to pronounce the words (since there were no dots or signs on them). However, Allah ﷻ preserved the original recitation taught by the Prophet ﷺ; and with time, the presently recited version—known as "the recitation of ʿĀṣim reported from Ḥafṣ"[3]—is the only version commonly recited.

3 Ḥafṣ learned it from a chain of teachers who learnt it from Imām ʿAlī ؑ.

Activity 2.4b: Review Questions

1. How does the Qurʾān help us to know that the Prophet ﷺ was a true Prophet?

2. How can the presence of a single verse—the *Āyah of Protection*[4]—mean that the rest of the Qurʾān is prevented from any corruption or alteration *(taḥrīf)*?

3. Logically, if there was a possibility that the Qurʾān could be corrupted, then how would that mean that Islam as a religion is corrupt? Why is it not possible for Allah ﷻ to allow Islam as a religion to be corrupted?

4. Why do a small minority of Muslims believe that parts of the Qurʾān have been taken away? Is their argument valid?

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15), Verse 9.

CHAPTER 3

Identifying Imāmah

3.1 Imāmah (Leadership after the Last Prophet ﷺ)

3.2 Qualities of an Imām and the First Imām

3.3 The Event of Ghadīr

3.1 Imāmah (Leadership after the Last Prophet ﷺ)

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify the difference between a Prophet ﷺ and an Imām ﷺ.
- Explain the concept of Imamate *(Imāmah)*.
- Compare and contrast the different ideologies of an Imām in Shīʿah and Ahlus Sunnah Islam.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of an Imām ﷺ.
- Identify the key reasons for the need of an Imām ﷺ.

INTRODUCTION

JORDAN: Okay, I am convinced that God sent Prophets, and that the last of the Prophets was Muḥammad. But as you pointed out, once the religion has been perfected, God still needs to guide us. So who should a person turn to after the Prophet passed away?

ME: That is the discussion which is known as Imamate, or *Imāmah* in Arabic, which means leadership in Islam.

JORDAN: Wait a minute, is that not a very controversial topic in Islam? Maybe we should avoid discussing it in order to preserve unity among the Muslims. I have heard about this topic, and it has to do with something historical. Why not let bygones be bygones, and just move along and forget about the past?

ME: A discussion about Imamate using logical arguments is extremely important and useful for Muslim unity. This is because:

1. Either, after discussing it, everyone will believe in the same thing, and we will be totally united;
2. Or, we will agree to disagree. We will understand each other's viewpoints, and we will understand that even though there are some points we disagree on, at the end of the day we are part of one nation and we can be united on the common areas.

JORDAN: In interacting with Muslims in the past, I have noticed that a lot of Muslims who care about the issue of Imamate can sometimes go to extremes regarding it. There are people like Salafīs/Wahhābīs/Dāʿish who will label anyone who accepts the concept of Imamate as being a disbeliever. On the other hand, there are some Shīʿah who regard all those who do not accept Imamate as being disbelievers.

ME: Throughout the history of Islam, there have always been *Takfīrīs.* These are people who do *takfīr* of other Muslims, which means that they label a Muslim as a disbeliever due to their beliefs. But according to the teachings of the family of the Prophet—the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, if a person calls another person a disbeliever, does not make them a disbeliever. It is not allowed for a Muslim to label another Muslim as such.

The belief in Imamate and the identity of the 12 Imāms ﷺ is a very important belief in Islam, and in fact, it is one of the fundamental beliefs. However, some Muslims have been misled or misunderstand the true definition of Imamate. This does not mean that they are not Muslims; it implies that they have not yet come to understand the true meaning of this belief and its implications.

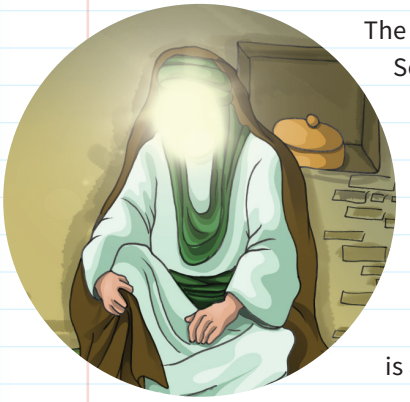
DEFINITION AND APPOINTMENT OF AN IMĀM

JORDAN: What does the concept of Imamate mean, and how is an *Imām* appointed?

ME: Imamate—or *Imāmah* in Arabic—literally means 'a doctrine which asserts that certain individuals from the lineage of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are to be accepted as leaders and guides of the nation after his death;' and it is the word used to describe the study of the 12 *Imāms* and leaders who were appointed by God after the final Messenger ﷺ.

In the Arabic language, *Imām* means a leader. It can also be used in different contexts to mean a leader, such as an *imām* of the congregational *(jamāʿah)* prayers, or the *imām* of a nation.

However, when discussing the leaders after the last Prophet ﷺ, *Imām* takes on a special meaning, and there is a difference of opinion between the Shīʿah and the Ahlus Sunnah definition of an *Imām*.



The Ahlus Sunnah definition of an *Imām* is as follows: Someone who is the overall leader for the Muslims after the Prophet ﷺ—both in matters of the world and in matters of religion. It is *wājib* for the Muslims to obey the *Imām*. This leader is **appointed for the Muslims by the Muslims.** This leader is also known as a caliph *(khalīfah* in Arabic).

The Shīʿah definition of an *Imām* is: One who is the overall leader and guide for the Muslims in all aspects of life; and is **appointed by Allah** ﷻ to that position.

STOP AND REFLECT: Looking at the difference in opinions found in the definition of an *Imām* between the two different sects, why is the Event of Ghadīr so important? What does this historical event prove, and why is it so significant?

JORDAN: Can a Prophet be an *Imām,* or are *Imāms* just the leaders who came after the last Prophet?

ME: Actually, a Prophet ﷺ can be an *Imām*[1] as well, because Imamate is a station that Prophets ﷺ can also reach. The Qurʾān refers to Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ being appointed as an *Imām* by Allah ﷻ. However, we usually do not use the word *Imām* to describe the final Prophet ﷺ, but that does not mean that he was not an *Imām*.

STOP AND REFLECT: When Allah ﷻ designated Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ as an *Imām* for humankind in Sūrah al-Baqarah (Chapter 2), Verse 124 of the Qurʾān, what was one of the conditions mentioned about this covenant, and how does this support the belief of the immaculateness of the *Imāms* of Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND QUALITIES OF AN IMĀM

JORDAN: What are the qualities of an *Imām,* in other words, what is different about an *Imām* compared to a Prophet?

ME: Before looking at the qualities of an *Imām*, let us review the roles of a Prophet, then we can see what roles an *Imām* must have. Based on that, we can then determine the characteristics that an *Imām* needs to have in order to fulfill their roles.

The roles of a Prophet are:

1. To receive the revelation *(waḥy)* from Allah ﷻ and convey that to the people.
2. To teach the relevant knowledge that people need in order to achieve the purpose for which they were created.
3. To preserve and protect the teachings of the religion from corruption.
4. To help bring up and purify others so that they can achieve their purpose of creation in this world.
5. To be a role model for perfection, and put into practice what they teach others.
6. To govern the society.
7. To be a channel for Allah ﷻ to send His special blessings and mercy upon the rest of humanity.

1 This station of *Imām* is slightly different from the 12 *Imāms* who are referred to when we mention that they are the leaders or successors after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

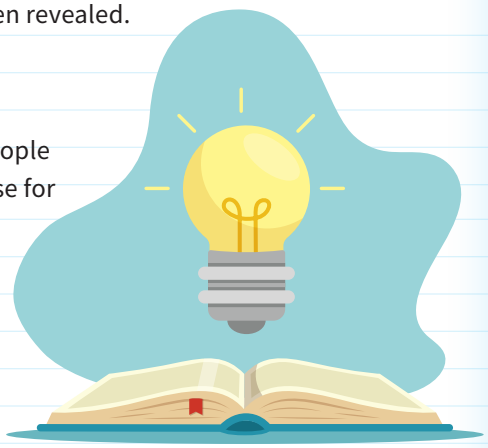
JORDAN: What is the wisdom behind God using a channel to do this? Why does He not directly do everything Himself?

ME: One of the reasons for this is to make sure that as part of turning to Allah ﷻ, we also turn to the best examples and role models that He has provided for us. This is very important because:

a) We need practical role models in our lives that we can follow, and

b) It makes us humble because we are being asked by Allah ﷻ to emulate another human being [meaning the Prophet or the *Imām*]—who is at the peak of perfection.

The roles that an *Imām* has to fulfill are similar to the roles of a Prophet. The major difference though is that the Prophets receive revelations but the *Imāms* protect what has already been revealed.



The roles of an *Imām* are:

1. To teach the knowledge that the people need in order to achieve the purpose for what they have been created. This includes explaining the rules and other teachings of the religion for all times. In every age and every time, there are "new" issues that come up which did not exist previously. We need someone to explain the position of the religion on these issues.
2. To preserve and protect the teachings from corruption.
3. To help upbring and purify others so that they can achieve the purpose which they were created for.
4. To be a role model for perfection and put into practice what they were teaching others.
5. To govern the society. Islamic Law consists of personal law, as well as social law. In order for Islam to really be practiced, there needs to be an Islamic society which allows for the social law to be put into practice. For example, Islamic courts that can step in when necessary so as to protect the rights of orphans, help solve major marital problems, punish criminals, etc.
6. To be a channel for Allah ﷻ to send His special blessings and mercy upon the rest of humanity.

Activity 3.1a: Venn Diagram

Create a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the differences in the roles of a Prophet and an *Imām*.

Upon completion of your diagram, answer the following question:

1. What responsibilities fall upon an *Imām* that prove the essential need of the 12th *Imām* عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف today?

Activity 3.1b: Review Questions

1. Why do we need *Imāms* ﷺ ? Why did Allah ﷻ not just send some more Prophets?

HINT: Look at the topic of the Seal of the Prophets in Lesson 2 to see why Allah ﷻ did not keep sending Prophets.

2. In what ways did Allah ﷻ make sure that the religion of Islam would not be corrupted after the final Prophet ﷺ like other religions were corrupted?

HINT: Look at the topic of the Seal of the Prophets in Lesson 2.

3. What is the main difference between the Shīʿah and Ahlus Sunnah definitions of an *Imām*?

4. Look up Sūrah al-Jumuʿah (Chapter 62), Verse 2.

   a. Write out its translation.

   b. What roles of the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ are described in this verse?

Activity 3.1c: Scenarios

Choose one of the following scenarios and give the best answer according to your knowledge. Think about how you would actually handle the situation. As you move on in the lessons, use your combined knowledge to answer these, and add more points to the logical arguments. Discuss your answers with a partner.

1. You and your friend are discussing the concept of *Imāmah*. Your friend suggests that in order to be able to go to Heaven, it is not critical to believe in this concept of *Imāmah*. What would you say to your friend?

2. There is an authentic *ḥadīth* narrated in *Al-Kāfī*, Vol.1, P. 276; as well as in the Ahlus Sunnah books such as: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* Vol. 6, P. 22; and *Kitāb al-Imārah*, which state that a person who dies without knowing the *Imām* of their time, dies in a state of ignorance *(jāhiliyyah)*. Seeing as how this *ḥadīth* is present in both Ahlus Sunnah and Shīʿah books, what logical arguments can you make to defend and prove the concept of *Imāmah*?

3. Some people say that the 12 *Imāms* ﷺ are not Divinely-appointed because their names are not mentioned in the Qurʾān. What basic arguments can you think of to prove the fallacy of this statement?

4. Your Islamic Studies teacher asks you to write an essay on the differences and similarities between Prophets and *Imāms*. What points do you think are the most important, and why?

5. It is narrated both from Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ that we benefit from the living Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف during his occultation like the sun benefits the people from behind the clouds.[2] What are some ways you can think of in regard to how we benefit from the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف during his occultation?

6. It has been narrated from the final Messenger ﷺ that awaiting the advent or the relief *(faraj)* of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is the best action for his nation.[3] What does awaiting the *Imām* عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف really mean? Is it passive or active? Think about these questions and come up with five things that you can do in this regard.

2 Ṭabrisī, Abū Manṣūr, *Al-Iḥtijāj*, Vol. 2, P. 471.

3 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khisāl*, Vol. 2, P. 610.

Activity 3.1d: Spiritual Connections

1. Based on the knowledge you have acquired on the concept of *Imāmah*, what are some new thoughts you have about supplicating to the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?

2. List different ways you can connect with the 12th Imām ﷺ on a regular basis.

3.2 Qualities of an Imām and the First Imām

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- List the qualities of an *Imām*.
- Explain how Imām ʿAlī ﷺ best fit these qualities after the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.
- Discuss the importance of certain qualities within an *Imām*.

JORDAN: I understand the responsibilities and roles of an *Imām*. But what kind of person would be able to fulfill these responsibilities?

ME: Logically speaking, an *Imām* needs to have the following qualities in order to fulfill the responsibilities that we discussed in the previous lesson.

1. **Immaculateness *(ʿIṣmah)*:** The *Imām* needs to be immaculate, free from all sins—what we refer to in Arabic as *maʿṣūm*, or else the *Imām* will not be able to lead the people effectively, or be a true role model for them.
2. **Knowledge *(ʿIlm)*:** The *Imām* needs to have the highest level of knowledge in order to be able to fulfill the roles mentioned in the previous lesson.
3. **Bravery and Courage *(Shujāʿah)*:** The *Imām* needs to possess the highest level of bravery both in facing the outer enemy and in combating one's own lower self, or else he will not be able to fulfill the role of being a true leader.
4. **Detachment from this materialistic world *(Zuhd)*:** If an *Imām* cannot detach himself from this lowly world, then he cannot be trusted as a leader who would be in charge of controlling the public treasury.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about present-day leaders. What are common complaints many people have about them? How does this prove the need for the above qualities in a true leader?

JORDAN: Who in history best demonstrated these characteristics?

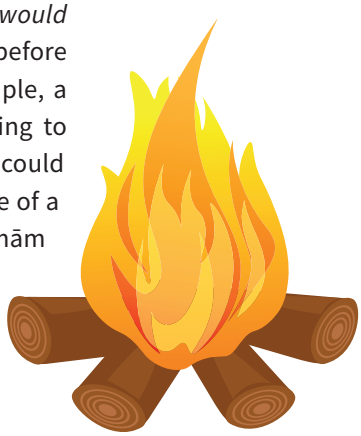
ME: After the Prophet ﷺ, Imāmʿ Alī ﷺ was the best example of an individual who fulfilled these four characteristics, and many more. Let us take a closer look at them in relation to Imāmʿ Alī ﷺ.

IMMACULATENESS

People have always acknowledged Imām ʿAlī's purity and special spiritual state. Ahlus Sunnah scholars usually say *'karamallāhu wajhah'* (may Allah ﷻ honor his face) after mentioning the name of Imām ʿAlī ؑ because they know that Imām ʿAlī ؑ never bowed down to any idol, and he never committed a single sin. For other companions, they typically say *'raḍiy allāhu ʿanhū* (may Allah ﷻ be pleased with him), but that does not apply to Imām ʿAlī ؑ because he never did anything to displease Allah ﷻ so we would never have to ask or pray to Allah ﷻ to be pleased with him.

KNOWLEDGE

Imām ʿAlī ؑ was so knowledgeable that he was the point of reference for the council that was tasked with compiling the correct manuscript of the Qurʾān. The second caliph famously used to say: "**لولا علي لهلك عمر**"—*"Had it not been for ʿAlī, ʿUmar would have perished!"*[1] Imām ʿAlī ؑ would challenge the people to ask him anything before they lose him[2]—no one but an *Imām* could issue such a challenge. For example, a delegation from the People of the Book *(Ahlul Kitāb)* came to Medina seeking to understand the expression '*Wajhullah*' (the Face of Allah), and only Imām ʿAlī ؑ could show them what it meant by this by using the example of which side is the face of a fire.[3] The Jewish leader questioned: *"Where will the Face of your Lord be?!"* Imām ʿAlī ؑ ordered for a fire to be lit. Then he asked: *"Where is the face of this fire?"* The man replied: *"I do not see a face for it."* So the Imām ؑ explained: *"This is an example to help you understand my Lord. To Him belongs the East and the West, so wherever you turn your face, there is the Face of Allah."*[4]



BRAVERY AND COURAGE

Imām ʿAlī ؑ was unmatched when it came to bravery and courage *(shujāʿah)*. He would always be seen facing forward in a battle *(karrār),* never escaping from the battlefield *(farrār)*—like many others did.[5] The Prophet ﷺ said that a strike from the sword of ʿAlī on the Day of Khandaq is better than the weight of the worship of all *Jinn* and human beings.[6]

DETACHMENT

There are many incidents and sayings of Imām ʿAlī ؑ that show his lack of fondness for this lowly world *(dunyā)*, and how he completely detached himself from it. For example, he said the following:

"O world (dunyā), O world (dunyā), leave me alone, are you concerned with me, or do you miss me? Your time will never come. Alas, go and deceive other than me, I have no need for you. I have divorced you three times, after which there is no return. Life in you is short, your threats are insignificant, and hope in you is abased. O how little the provision, how long the road ahead, how far the journey, and how mighty the destination…"[7]

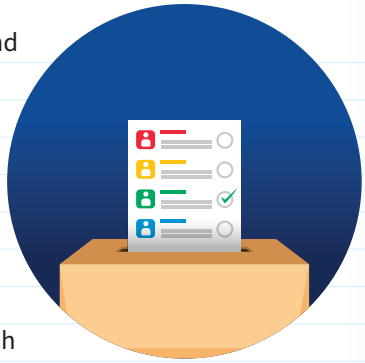
1 Baḥrānī, Syed Hāshim, *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, Vol. 1, P. 373.
2 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 403.
3 Daylamī, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, *Irshād al-Qulūb*, Vol. 2, P. 316.
4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl,* Ch. 28, P. 182, Ḥadīth #16.
5 Ibn Abil-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 13, P. 186.
6 Naysābūrī, Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Vol. 3, P. 34. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
7 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Short Saying 64.

Activity 3.2a: Elaborate it!

Above, you read some examples of how Imām ʿAlī ﷺ best fit all the characteristics of being the rightful leader after the Prophet ﷺ. Complete the chart below with more examples of how he fits these qualities, and some evidence from a narration *(ḥadīth),* saying from the Imām ﷺ, or some other historical proof.

CHARACTERISTIC	STORY/EXAMPLE	SUPPORTING PROOF (ḤADĪTH, SAYING…)
Immaculateness ***(ʿIṣmah)***		
Knowledge ***(ʿIlm)***		
Bravery and Courage ***(Shujāʿah)***		
Detachment from this World ***(Zuhd)***		

JORDAN: I understand the roles that an *Imām* has to play, and I also understand how he needs to have those four qualities in order to be worthy of being a leader or the *Imām*. But why can such a person not be selected by the people? Why does he have to be chosen by God?



ME: There are several reasons why he has to be appointed by God—not the people—some of which include:

1. These four characteristics are not things which can be measured by the people because they are internal characteristics. Allah ﷻ is the only One who can measure these characteristics accurately.
2. Since Prophets were appointed by Allah ﷻ, why should it be any different for the *Imāms*? Nobody ever said that people should have been able to choose their own Prophets, so why do they say that when it comes to the *Imāms*?

   "Allah knows best where He places His Message (or who He chooses as His representatives)." [8]
3. In order for someone to choose an *Imām*, that person would have to be an expert on the qualities of an *Imām*. The only One who is an expert on these matters is Allah ﷻ, and whoever He endows with this knowledge, i.e. the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.
4. If people were to make the choice themselves, they would do so based on their own criteria (like selfish reasons), not on the criteria that are essential for an *Imām*.
5. What is the alternative to being appointed by Allah ﷻ? If it is being appointed by the people, then one would ask: which people? Throughout history, it has never been "all" the people, in fact, it has not even been the "majority" of the people—sometimes it was the elite, sometimes it was one person, and sometimes it was six—there was no consistent way of doing it.
6. Regardless of the number of people who pick a leader, are they ever going to truly choose the most worthy one for Imamate or true leadership? Even if all the intellectual figures gather around and try to select one person, would they accurately be able to choose the rightful one, or is that knowledge only with Allah ﷻ, the All-Knowing One?

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 124.

THINK, PAIR, WRITE

Reason number 5 above, poses the question that if people were to select a leader, then which people? In a democracy, all the people have a right to vote. Why could the same not be applied here? Are there any faults within the democratic system of voting that would make it an inappropriate or unjust way to choose an *Imām*?

Take some time to discuss your thoughts with a partner. Together, come up with at least two reasons why the democratic way of voting would not be a just way of choosing an *Imām,* and why it is necessary for Allah ﷻ to appoint the *Imām*.

Write: Elaborate on those two points in your own words.

IMĀM ʿALĪ ؑ IS THE FIRST IMĀM

JORDAN: What is the proof that God appointed ʿAlī as the *Imām* after the Prophet?

ME: There are several different ways to prove that Allah ﷻ appointed Imām ʿAlī ؑ as the successor after the final Messenger ﷺ. Some of these are as follows:

1. VERSES OF THE QURʾĀN

a) Verse of Purity *(Āyah of Taṭhīr)*:

"Allah intends only to remove all impurity from you, O people of the (Prophet's) household [Ahlul Bayt], and to purify you with a thorough purification." [9]

This verse shows that the Ahlul Bayt ؑ were purified by Allah ﷻ and all sins are removed from them, thus they are immaculate *(maʿṣūm)*. Therefore, they are the only ones who possess the necessary qualities to be the leaders after the Prophet ﷺ; and one of the people who was amongst those who were purified was Imām ʿAlī ؑ.

b) Verse of Propagation/Conveyance *(Āyah of Tablīgh)*:

"O Messenger! Convey (Balligh - بلّغ) that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you will not have conveyed His Message; and Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people." [10]

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 33.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 67.

This verse outlines that there is something so important for the people to know that if the Prophet ﷺ does not convey this crucial news to them, then it would be as if he did not tell them anything about Islam. What was that vital thing? This verse was revealed toward the end of the life of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—after all of the major and minor teachings of Islam had already been conveyed to the people. The only thing left was the appointment of a successor who was to lead the nation after his demise. This verse was revealed when the Prophet ﷺ had been told to gather together more than 100,000 Muslims in a place called Ghadīr Khumm after the Final Pilgrimage *(Ḥajjatul Wadāʿ),* where he was commanded by Allah ﷻ to appoint Imām ʿAlī ؑ as their *Mawlā* (Master and Leader) after him. This incident will be explained in more detail in the next lesson (Lesson 6).

c) Verse of Guardianship *(Āyah of Wilāyah)*:

"Your Walīyy (Guardian/Master) is only Allah, His Messenger, and the faithful who establish the prayer (ṣalāh) and give charity (zakāh) while they bow down."[11]

According to a large number of traditions from the books of both the Shīʿah and the Ahlus Sunnah, the "faithful who establish the prayer *(ṣalāh)* and give charity *(zakāh)* while they bow down (are in the position of *rukūʿ*)" refers **only** to Imām ʿAlī ؑ. This verse means that Allah ﷻ is the ultimate *Walīyy* (Master); and the way to truly obey Him is to obey the Prophet ﷺ, and after the Prophet ﷺ, to obey Imām ʿAlī ؑ as the leader.

d) Verse of Malediction *(Āyah of Mubāhalah)*:

"Should anyone argue with you concerning this after the knowledge that has come to you, then say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then let us pray earnestly and invoke the curse of Allah (to come down) upon the liars.'"[12]

This verse was revealed on the occasion of the challenge that Allah ﷻ told the Prophet ﷺ to present to the Christian delegation who refused to accept the logic behind why God cannot have a son. It commanded the Prophet ﷺ to bring, along with his children and women, others who were at the level of being **his own self**. Under the guidance of Allah ﷻ, Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the only one whom the Prophet ﷺ brought for his own self because he was the sole person qualified to be in that category. This means that in everything that really matters when representing Islam, such as *ʿiṣmah,* leadership, guardianship, authority, etc., Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the **same** as the Prophet ﷺ—except, of course, that he was **not** a Prophet.

11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 55.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 61.

e) Verse of Authority *(Āyah of Iṭāʿat)*:

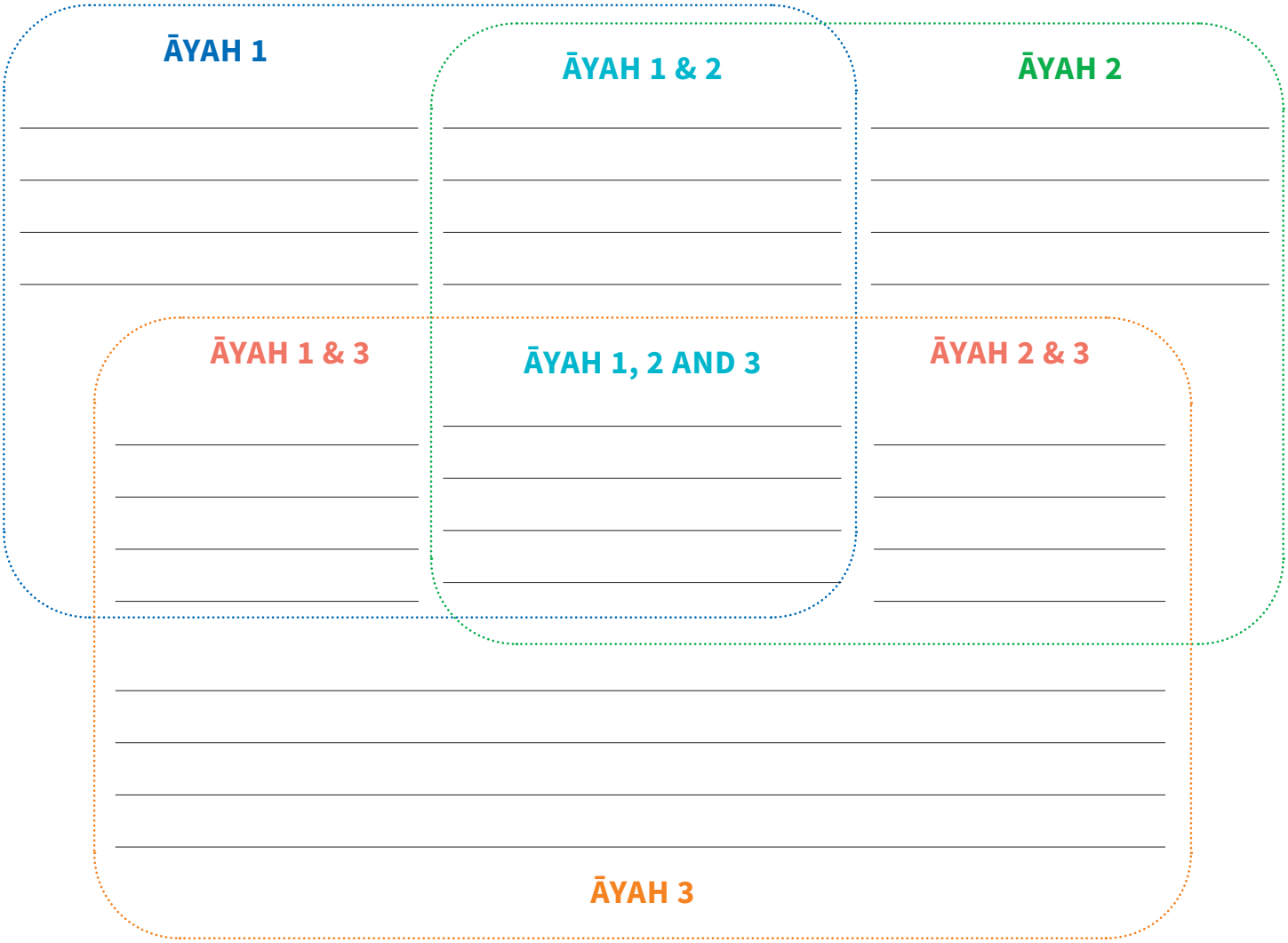
"O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you." [13]

In this verse, Allah ﷻ commands us to obey Him, the Messenger, and 'those vested with authority' from amongst the Muslim community. There are many narrations which indicate that 'those vested with authority' are the 12 Imāms from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 59.

Activity 3.2b: Venn Diagram

Compare and contrast the verses *(āyāt)* mentioned above using the Venn Diagram below.



How does each verse separately prove that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was the rightful successor after the Prophet ﷺ?

JORDAN: I see how many verses of the Qurʾān point us in the direction of ʿAlī being the leader after the Prophet, especially if we read them carefully and try to understand deeply. So then why did God not just mention his name explicitly in the Qurʾān, thus making it easier for people to understand and realize this?

ME: That is a very good question, and there are different ways we can answer this:

1. One of the ways that Allah ﷻ has preserved the Qurʾān is by not explicitly mentioning certain names in this Divine Book, Imām ʿAlī ؑ being one of them. If the Almighty would have mentioned his name, then the enemies would have felt more compelled to try and alter the Qurʾān.

a) Allah ﷻ tests human beings in different ways. One of the tests is to learn how to approach and understand the Qurʾān in the correct manner. Someone who does so will clearly realize that Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the rightful successor of the final Messenger ﷺ.

b) The style of the Qurʾān is not to make explicit mention of names. The name of the Prophet ﷺ is only mentioned four times as Muḥammad, and once as Aḥmad. In the entire Qurʾān, only one woman is mentioned by name (Maryam), while others are referenced, but not actually named. The Qurʾān tends to refer to incidents and people in a general way by using characteristics. This is another way that makes the Qurʾān relevant for all times, not just a book of history.

c) The Qurʾān commands us to refer to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ for answers to our questions; and he clearly and explicitly mentioned to the people on many occasions that Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the rightful successor.

2. NARRATIONS OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

On many occasions, the final Messenger ﷺ told the people that Imām ʿAlī ؑ would be his successor after him. He also told them that Imām ʿAlī ؑ is the most knowledgeable among them. Since the Prophet ﷺ was immaculate *(maʿṣūm)*, everything that he said regarding his successor was a way of telling us that this is what Allah ﷻ wanted.

For example, soon after the Prophet ﷺ was given the mission of Prophethood, Allah ﷻ ordered him to invite his close family for a meal, and call them toward Islam. On that occasion, he clearly announced that the successor after him will be Imām ʿAlī ؑ. Imagine this was right after he was told to announce his own Prophethood.

JORDAN: Okay, then how do we know that there were 11 more *Imāms* after him and who they were?

ME: We know about the rest of the 11 *Imāms* because in a number of traditions, the Prophet ﷺ said that after him, there will be 12 successors. In some narrations, he even mentioned the names of each of the 12 *Imāms*. In others, he specified that they would all be from Quraysh, or from the Banī Hāshim. The traditions about 12 successors appear in the Ahlus Sunnah books as well, such as the following:

Jābir ibn Samura narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said: *"This matter (life) will not end until it is passed by 12 caliphs." He then whispered a sentence. I asked my father what the Prophet said. He said, the Prophet added: "All of them will be from Quraysh."* [14]

Throughout the ages, the Ahlus Sunnah scholars have tried to understand which 12 caliphs could meet the description of being the Prophet's successors, but they have been unable to do so. The only legitimate and sensible answer is the 12 *Imāms*.

A second way to know who the next *Imām* would be is that before the *Imām* of a particular time would leave this world, he would announce the Divine appointment of the *Imām* after him by doing the following:

1. He would give him his sword, his books, and special relics, such as the flag and armor of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
2. He would invite the respectable and trustworthy Shīʿahs of that time to meet the next *Imām,* and witness that he has been appointed as the next successor.

Another way that people were able to recognize the *Imām* of the time was through miracles—better referred to as extraordinary things—that they could perform. An extraordinary thing that is performed by someone close to Allah ﷻ—but not in the capacity of proving one's Prophethood since they were not Prophets—is called a *karāmah* (the plural of which is *karāmāt*). Sometimes, the *Imāms* would perform a *karāmah* in order to show the people who was right. For example, Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ؑ sat on a fire without being touched or harmed by it in order to show people that his brother was not the rightful *Imām*.[15] Imām as-Sajjād ؑ demonstrated to the people that he was the rightful *Imām*—not his uncle, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah—by going to *Ḥajar al-Aswad* which testified to his being the true *Imām*.[16]

JORDAN: You said that God appoints the *Imāms*. Then why did the Prophet or the *Imām* appoint the next successor?

ME: In doing so, they were announcing the command of Allah ﷻ for His leader and representative on Earth.

14 Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 3, P. 1452; Bukhārī, Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* Vol. 9, P. 329, and Vol. 4, P. 165, Ḥadīth #6682. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* (English), Ḥadīth #9329; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* (Arabic), Vol. 4, P. 165, Ḥadīth #6682 (numbering of al-ʿAlamiyyah). (All Ahlus Sunnah Sources)

15 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 48, P. 67.

16 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 348.

Activity 3.2c: Review Questions

1. Why does an *Imām* need to have the quality of bravery and courage *(shajāʿah)*?

2. How does the Verse of Purity show that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was the rightful successor of the Prophet ﷺ?

3. Why do Shīʿahs believe that an *Imām* has to be selected by Allah ﷻ, not elected by the people?

4. Other than the first *Imām* ﷺ, what is the proof that the other *Imāms* ﷺ were appointed by Allah ﷻ?

Activity 3.2d: Spiritual Connector

Think about the qualities of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ discussed above.

1. Although we cannot be immaculate *(maʿṣūm)* like the Prophets ﷺ and the *Imāms* ﷺ, how can we work hard to avoid sin and purify our soul as much as humanly possible?

2. What are 3-5 things you can do in your daily life to increase your knowledge, your courage, and become detached from worldly things in order to build a stronger connection with Allah ﷻ?

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3.3 The Event of Ghadīr

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain the significance of the event that transpired at Ghadīr Khumm.
- Provide evidence that Ghadīr Khumm took place, and that it is widely accepted by the Ahlus Sunnah as well.
- Define what the term *Mawlā* truly means.
- Conclude why and how *Mawlā* in this context refers to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ as the successor of the Prophet ﷺ.

Activity 3.3a: Quick Write

Before we begin this lesson, briefly write what you know about Ghadīr Khumm and its significance in Shīʿah Islam.

JORDAN: Please tell me more about the event that took place at Ghadīr Khumm. I have brought my Sunnī friend, Khalid, who would like to present his perspective on this matter as well.

ME (THE SHĪʿAH MUSLIM): "Ghadīr" means 'pond.' "Ghadīr Khumm" refers to a Pond in the area of Khumm which is on the road between Mecca and Medina.

After the Prophet's final (and only) pilgrimage *(Ḥajj)*, before the people—who were leaving Mecca—were going to split into different paths heading back home toward Medina, Yemen, and Shām, he gathered them at a place known as Ghadīr Khumm, and there, as per the instructions of Allah ﷻ, he announced that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ would be the leader after him.

The Prophet ﷺ declared:

"Man kuntu Mawlāhu, fa hādha ʿAlīyyun Mawlā." [1]
"Whomsoever I am the master of, then this ʿAlī is their master!"

Prior to this, Allah ﷻ revealed to the Prophet ﷺ:

"O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message. And Allah will protect you from the people; indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people." [2]

After this event took place, Allah ﷻ revealed this verse:

"…And today, I have perfected for you your religion, and I have completed My blessings upon you, and I have chosen Islam as your religion." [3]

STOP AND REFLECT: Imagine that you were one of the many people gathered in this crowd. How do you think you would have felt? What might have been the first thing you did?

KHALID: What if I say I do not believe that such a thing ever happened?

ME: This is an event which was attended by hundreds of thousands of people, and reported by thousands of them afterward. It appears so many times in the books of *Aḥādīth* that are accepted by both Shīʿahs and Ahlus Sunnah that it is considered to be what is termed as a '*mutawātir ḥadīth*'—meaning 'a narration that is so widely reported that it is impossible that people would have conspired together to lie about it.' According to the Ahlus Sunnah scholars, *Mutawātir ḥadīth* must be accepted, and someone who denies them is considered to be a disbeliever *(kāfir)*.

Further to this, among the people who narrated this *ḥadīth* were: Imām ʿAlī ؑ, Imām Ḥasan ؑ, Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb—all of whom are considered to be reliable narrators by the Ahlus Sunnah.

So how can you deny this event when there is such heavy evidence to prove it?

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Jāmiʿ al-Akhbār*, Vol. 1, P. 10.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 67.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 3.

KHALID: Okay…I accept that the event took place. But, who says that it means that ʿAlī is the Prophet's successor?

ME: The Prophet ﷺ clearly stated that Imām ʿAlī ؑ is the *Mawlā* of everyone after the Prophet ﷺ. *Mawlā* means 'Master.'

KHALID: It is true that *Mawlā* can mean 'Master,' but it can mean other things as well. One of the meanings of *Mawlā* is 'friend.' So the Prophet wanted to tell the people that ʿAlī is their friend.

ME: Let us analyze this in the following ways:

1. One of the meanings of *Mawlā* in the Qurʾān is 'Master.' It is not correct to assume that the Prophet ﷺ used it to mean friend without any proof, because Master is also a valid possibility.
2. Many scholars from the Ahlus Sunnah have understood *Mawlā* in this *ḥadīth* to mean 'Master.' The wording of the narration, where the Prophet ﷺ first asked the Muslims: *"Do I not have more right over you than your own selves?"* proves that the meaning here is mastership and rulership—not mere friendship or love. This wording is narrated in several of the Ahlus Sunnah sources such as Ṭabarī and Ibn Hishām.
3. In some narrations of this incident, in place of *Mawlā*, the word *'Amīr'*—which means 'commander,' or *'Walī'*—which means 'leader' has been used, which is even more clear in showing that the Prophet ﷺ wanted to appoint a successor.
4. In many versions of this *ḥadīth*, right before the Prophet ﷺ said the famous phrase quoted above, he first asked the people gathered there this question: *"Do I not have more right over you than yourselves?"* Here, the Prophet ﷺ was referring to the verse: *"The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own souls…"* [4] The Prophet ﷺ was clearly indicating that he was speaking about the right he had over the Muslims of being obeyed in an absolute sense. This is strong evidence that when he announced Imām ʿAlī ؑ as the *Mawlā*, he meant that Imām ʿAlī ؑ should be obeyed absolutely as a *Master,* like it was commanded for the people to obey him.
5. After this event took place, the Muslims went to give their oath of allegiance (pledge *Bayʿah)* to Imām ʿAlī ؑ. Why would they pledge allegiance to someone who just became their 'friend'?

BAYʿAH

Oath of allegiance

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 6.

6. The Prophet ﷺ would not inconvenience and preach to hundreds of thousands of people under the scorching sun, just to tell them to take Imām ʿAlī ؑ as a friend.

7. In this sermon that the Prophet ﷺ delivered, he mentioned how he will be leaving this temporal world soon. Therefore, it is natural that he would guide the Muslims about this important matter of who will be their leader after he passes away.

8. After the Prophet ﷺ delivered this sermon, a famous poet by the name of Ḥasan ibn Thābit stood up and composed this line of poetry: *"He said to ʿAlī, stand up—I am pleased with you as an Imām and a Guide after me."* This clearly shows that the Prophet ﷺ intended to appoint Imām ʿAlī ؑ as the Master, and not just a friend.

9. The verse of the Qurʾān that was revealed (Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 3) says that the religion of Islam has now been completed and perfected, which would only occur if something **very important** had been conveyed—such as the appointment of the successor of the Prophet ﷺ under the command of Allah ﷻ.

Activity 3.3b: Complete the Chart

In the chart below, choose four of the justifications above as to why *Mawlā* in this context **cannot** simply mean 'friend,' and explain why they are reasonable in your own words.

JUSTIFICATION	EXPLAIN WHY REASONABLE

Activity 3.3c: Review Questions

1. Why does a *Mutawātir ḥadīth* have to be true?

2. Which parts of the verses in the Qurʾān relating to the Event of Ghadīr show that Ghadīr Khumm is very significant?

3. In your own words, what are three reasons which prove that *'Mawlā'* in the context of the Event of Ghadīr means 'Master' not friend?

Activity 3.3d: Quick Write

Upon finishing this lesson, go back and read your initial quick write. Did you learn any new information? Complete a second two minute quick write with a cohesive summary of Ghadīr Khumm based on your past and present knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

The Hereafter

4.1 Maʿād—The Hereafter,
and Barzakh—The Barrier
4.2 Maʿād in the Qurʾān

4.1 Maʿād—The Hereafter, and Barzakh—The Barrier

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the concept of *Maʿād*.
- Comprehend and explain the key concepts and beliefs of *Barzakh*.
- Identify the Islamic perspective of the soul.
- Outline the Qurʾānic verses to help identify the concept of *Barzakh*.

INTRODUCTION

The fifth root or pillar of the Roots of Religion *(Uṣūl ad-Dīn)* is the belief in the Hereafter or *Maʿād* as it is referred to in Arabic. *Maʿād* comes from the Arabic word *ʿawd* (عَوْد) which means 'to return.' *Maʿād* means 'a place or time of return,' and it refers to the return of the soul to the body, or the return to Allah ﷻ. In the topic of *Maʿād*, matters relating to what happens after this world are discussed.

MAʿĀD AS ONE OF THE UṢŪL AD-DĪN

The *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* are those Principles of Religion that are so important that without them the religion becomes meaningless. They are like pillars without which every other belief in the religion will collapse.

Without the belief in *Maʿād*, life would have little to no purpose because there would be no place or time where we could reap the full rewards of our deeds in this temporary world. Also, without this belief, we would not be able to understand the deeper purpose behind the existence of evil and suffering. Additionally, one of the most important teachings of the Prophets ﷺ was about the Hereafter; and without the Hereafter, a lot of what they taught us would be invalid.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are the *Uṣūl ad-Dīn*? List all five of them. Based on what you know, why is *Maʿād* so important, and how does it relate to the other *Uṣūl ad-Dīn*?

LIFE AFTER DEATH

What Happens when Someone Dies?

According to the teachings of Islam, death is not the end of existence, but rather it is the separation of the soul from the body and the entrance into another form of existence. People who look at things only from the perspective of this world say that human beings reach their prime when they are young adults, and after that they begin to decline. They tend to die when they are old, weak, and not as beautiful as they used to be, like an overripe fruit that is no longer useful to pick and eventually falls to the ground.

From the perspective of religion and faith however, a human body gets older and eventually weaker, but the human soul is always supposed to be growing more beautiful and stronger. Allah ﷻ takes the souls of believers away when they have attained the best of whatever the world has to offer, and they now need to move to another place in order to acquire more. The analogy is that of a fruit which has become perfectly ripe on a branch, and now needs to be taken and sold in the market before it becomes overripe and useless.

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you think you could explain why people die at different ages? How does this tie into the Justice of Allah ﷻ?

Activity 4.1a: Analogy and Charting

This lesson uses the analogy of fruit to explain the difference between secular thinking and the Islamic point of view.

1. What other analogy can you think of to explain this to your Muslim or non-Muslim friend?

2. Would your analogy be different when explaining the concept in question to a Muslim versus a non-Muslim?

   Use the chart below to help you in the thought process. Once completed, compare your chart with others in the class.

	MUSLIM	NON-MUSLIM
Analogy		
Point 1:		
Point 2:		

THE HUMAN SOUL

The soul is one's self and the answer to the question: "Who am I?" According to our belief, the soul is different from the body. Here are four reasons why this is the case:

1. A human being is more than just a physical entity. A human being has the power of being able to understand and comprehend.

   Understanding and comprehension is done by means of organs like the brain; however, the overall process of understanding, and in fact the job of keeping the human body truly alive and aware lies with the soul.

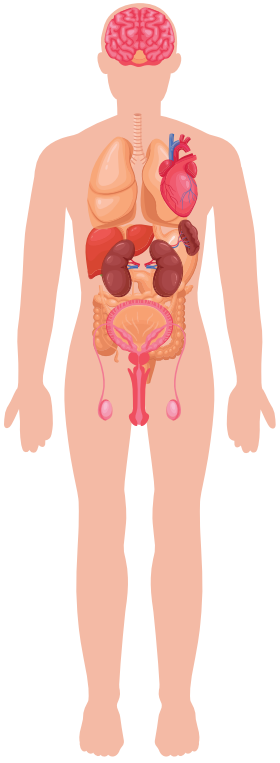
2. Unity of identity and personality: In the course of the normal operation of a human body, all or most of the cells in the body will eventually die out and be replaced by new cells. On a physical level, every human being is very different from what he/she was, for example, ten years ago. However, we still say that the body that was there ten years ago was "me"—the same way that the body that is here right now is "me" as well.

3. Lack of division of the soul: Everything about our body can be divided and subdivided. However, "I" is not something that can be physically divided. Therefore, "I" is different from the body.

4. In a number of *āyāt*, the Qurʾān describes the process of death with the verb, *tawaffā*. *Tawaffā* in Arabic means 'to take something away fully.' Allah ﷻ describes the process of death as follows:

TAWAFFĀ:
to take something away fully

> *"Say: 'You will be taken away (tawaffā) by the angel of death, who has been charged with you. Then you will be brought back to your Lord.'"* [1]

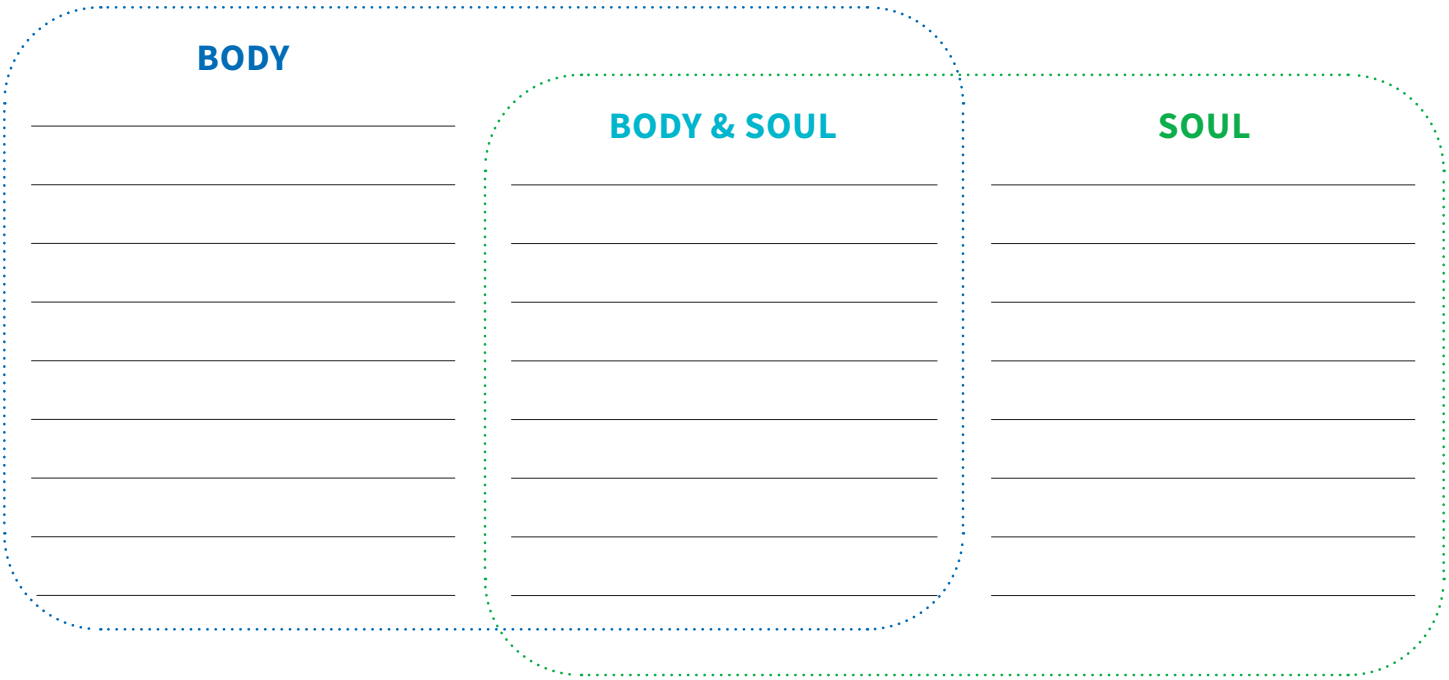


In this verse, Allah ﷻ refers to the process of death as being taken away, then at a later time, being returned. What is taken away has to be different from the body because the body stays in the same place after it is buried. Therefore, when a person dies, the angel of death fully takes away the soul from the body.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah as-Sajdah (32), Verse 11.

Activity 4.1b: Venn Diagram

Create a Venn Diagram below on the body and soul. Once completed, answer the following questions:



1. How do you explain the difference between your body and soul? What is the soul from an Islamic point of view? Knowing this difference, how can this affect our spirituality?

2. How would you answer the question: “Who am I?”

BARZAKH (THE INTERMEDIARY)

In the Arabic language, *barzakh* literally means 'something—like a barrier—that is between two things.' In the context of *Maʿād*, *barzakh* refers to 'life after death, before the Day of Judgment.' It is sometimes called 'intermediary' because it is a state between this world and the Hereafter. After human beings die, they enter *barzakh*.

BARZAKH IN THE QURʾĀN AND AḤĀDĪTH

In over 20 places in the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ describes the world of *barzakh*. Some examples are as follows:

1. *"When death comes to one of them, they say: 'My Lord! Take me back, so that I may act righteously in what I have left behind.' By no means! There are mere words that they utter! And ahead of them is a barrier (barzakh) until the Day they will be resurrected."* [2]

How do these verses show us about the existence of *barzakh*? Allah ﷻ says that before the Day of Resurrection—after a person dies and leaves this world—they will be in *barzakh*, or a stage in between this world and the Hereafter.

2. *"He was told: 'Enter paradise!' He said: 'Alas! If only my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me, and made me one of the honored ones!'"* [3]

How do these verses explain to us about the existence of *barzakh*? They describe a special believer known as the Believer *(Muʾmin)* of *Āl Yāsīn.* He was martyred due to his beliefs in One God and trying to advise the other people to the truth. After his martyrdom, he addressed his people who were still alive and wished they could know he is honorably being welcomed into paradise. This paradise cannot be the Paradise of the Hereafter (as the Day of Judgment has not occurred yet), but rather it was a paradise that exists while the world is still continuing, so it was in the station of *barzakh*.

3. *"Then Allah saved him [Muʾmin Āl Firʿawn—the Believer from among the People of Pharaoh] from their evil schemes, while a terrible punishment besieged Pharaoh's clan: the Fire which they are exposed to morning and evening. And on that Day when the Hour sets in Pharaoh's clan will enter the severest punishment."* [4]

These verses outline to us about the existence of *barzakh* because they describe about two stages of punishment for Pharaoh and his people:

a) A fire that they are exposed to every morning and evening;

b) Another fire that they will enter where they will face the most severe of punishments.

The first fire is in the world of *barzakh* where there is day and night. Here, they are being exposed to the fire every morning and evening, but they are not remaining in it. The second fire will be after the Day of Judgment where there will be no day or night.[5] It is a fire in which they will enter and remain therein, thus its punishment will be much more severe than the first fire.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verses 99-100.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yāsīn (36), Verses 26-27.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ghāfir (40) , Verses 45-46.
5 ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, Vol. 1, P. 350.

STOP AND REFLECT: Knowing that the body and the soul are two different entities, and that *barzakh* is a concept in Islam, what can you do now while on Earth to create a paradise in *barzakh*?

After the Battle of Badr, many of the polytheists were slain, the Prophet ﷺ addressed their dead bodies. One of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked him: *"What benefit is there in speaking to them, for they are dead?"* The Prophet ﷺ replied: *"They can hear better than you can."* [6]

The Prophet ﷺ wanted to teach people that when someone dies, they are still alive (but in a different world), and they are capable of interacting with this world.

6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥar al-Anwār*, Vol. 19, P. 346.

STOP AND REFLECT:

a. In which verse of the Qurʾān does Allah ﷻ tell us about the martyrs of Islam and what state they are in while in *barzakh*? Write its translation below.

b. How does this connect to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ?

THE FORM OF HUMAN BEINGS IN BARZAKH

According to traditions, people in *barzakh* are given a body which is a more subtle and delicate one than the physical body (of this world). Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ tells us that they have bodies like their physical bodies (in this world),[7] meaning that they resemble their physical forms. Some expert scholars have explained these bodies by using dreams as an example. People in dreams have bodies that resemble their physical bodies, but yet they are not physical.

7 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 3, P. 244.

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND BARZAKH

What is the reason behind *barzakh*? Why did Allah ﷻ not just send people directly to the Heaven or Hell of the Hereafter? Why did He create an intermediary realm of existence referred to as *barzakh*?

We will now consider four responses to this question:

1. The world of *barzakh* is an opportunity for people to prepare for the "higher" worlds that they will transition to after the Day of Judgment. For example, in order for people to prepare for being able to really benefit from the Paradise of the Hereafter, they are given the opportunity to first experience the paradise of *barzakh*. Similarly, in order for the wrongdoers to face the Fire of Hell, they are first exposed to the fire of *barzakh*. We have already mentioned an example of this in the verses above regarding Pharaoh and his clan.

2. *Barzakh* is an opportunity for those who may have come up short with respect to their actions to benefit from the lasting deeds they performed while in this world. For example, those who leave behind righteous children who pray for them; or those who helped in developing institutions or organizations that continue to assist others; and/or those individuals who leave behind useful knowledge from which others will benefit from the fruits of these actions—these people will continue to reap the rewards of these deeds while they are in the grave awaiting the Day of Judgment. As well, people in the world of *barzakh* can be helped through the gifts of good actions that others perform on their behalf.

   As a practical tip, let us not be selfish with the good actions that we perform. We can either gift the rewards *(thawāb)* of our actions to others (like our family members, friends, or teachers who have passed away—especially those who had a positive impact on our development); or we can include them in our intention *(nīyyah)* when performing good actions. Material things reduce when they are shared, however, the rewards of actions done do not reduce when we share them with others, in fact they increase. You will get the full rewards of them, and those who you gift them to will also receive rewards. The rewards are even multiplied for you because of upholding the rights of the deceased.

3. The Day of Judgment and what lies beyond has to take place after everyone has lived and passed away in this world. *Barzakh* is a transitory world where those who die will live until that day when the trumpet is blown and the Day of Judgment begins.

4. Some believers who knowingly committed evil deeds that they did not seek repentance for, or those which were not forgiven, may face the punishment for their evil actions in the stage of *barzakh*. This could be through the squeezing of the grave, or living through the hell of *barzakh.* In either case, this experience can result in their being purified of their sins, thus enabling them to join the people of Heaven in the Hereafter.

LOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR WHY THERE IS A HEREAFTER

What logical arguments can help a person understand why there has to be a Hereafter?

In many verses of the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ tells us about the next life and the everlasting Hereafter. This is sufficient proof for us to realize and accept that it exists. However, it is still beneficial for us to analyze some logical reasons so that we can better comprehend what is the need for the existence of a Hereafter. When we understand the rationale behind fundamental principles of our faith, then our belief becomes even stronger. Also, it helps us to appreciate what Allah ﷻ has told us about these matters even more.

Let us analyze some reasons for the existence of a Hereafter.

ARGUMENT #1:

The Innate Nature that Seeks to Live Forever

The logical argument for this is as follows:

1. Human beings have been created with an innate nature (the *fiṭrah)* that seeks to live forever.
2. Allah ﷻ would not place this desire within human beings and then not fulfill it. This is because He is All-Wise and Just.
3. This world is not a place where anyone can stay forever. Everything in this world ages and then eventually dies.

Therefore, there must be another world in which one can live forever, and that world is the Hereafter.

ARGUMENT #2:

Purpose of the Universe

The logical argument for this is as follows:

1. We can all see that we live in a vast and expansive universe—the limits of which we still have not discovered. The incredible level of detail and precision within this universe, and how it has been designed to permit life in general, and human life in particular.
2. It does not make sense that all of this is here so that one day human beings will just perish, and eventually the world will cease to exist, with no consequences or effects.

Therefore, there must be a world beyond this one that serves as the ultimate purpose for this world.

ARGUMENT #3:

The Full Realization of True Justice

The logical argument of this is as follows:

1. This world is a place where sometimes, someone who does evil receives more than someone who does good, and some people suffer a great deal despite being innocent. Human beings have an innate desire for justice. If there was no world beyond this world, then the existence of this world alone would be unfair because justice is not completely realized in this world. It would also be incomplete because the inclination for justice would not be fulfilled.

Therefore, there must be another world in which all rights will be restored and justice will be demonstrated.

Activity 4.1c: Charting Key Points

Complete the following chart about the logical arguments.

	ARGUMENT #1	ARGUMENT#2	ARGUMENT #3
TOPIC			
JUSTIFICATION (How does it fit the concept of Maʿād)			
PROOF (From the Qurʾān or Aḥādīth)			
ADĀLAH (Connect this concept to the Justice of Allah ﷻ)			

With a partner, choose one of the arguments for the existence of the Hereafter that you summarized above. Think about how you could use this reasoning to argue both for and against the Hereafter. Complete the table below with points you could make for each side.

Activity 4.1c (Continued)

POINTS ARGUING FOR IT	POINTS ARGUING AGAINST IT

How can you prove through the arguments mentioned in this lesson that indeed the Hereafter is a reality?

Review Questions

1. Why is belief in *Maʿād* one of the *Uṣūl ad-Dīn*?

2. What is the main difference between the Islamic perspective on death and a non-religious perspective on it?

3. Give one argument that demonstrates that the soul is more than just a physical entity.

4. Choose one of the sets of verses mentioned as proof for *barzakh,* and explain (in your own words) what it tells us about that world of existence.

5. What are different ways in which someone who is in *barzakh* can grow and be purified?

6. How can *barzakh* be an opportunity for some people to prepare for what lies beyond?

7. Pick a good action that you wish to perform, but before completing it, identify an individual or a group of deceased believers whom you would like to include in your intention as a way of helping them in *barzakh*. Be prepared to share your experience in class.

Activity 4.1d: Spiritual Connectors

1. Make a list of five practical deeds that can be of great help to you in *barzakh*.

Lesson Extensions

1. Research verses of the Qurʾān and *aḥādīth* from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ that support the concept of *barzakh*. Find at least one of each not mentioned in this lesson. How do they prove that *barzakh* exists?

2. Imagine that you had to write an introductory paragraph to a book on the concept of *Maʿād* from the perspective of Muslims to help non-Muslims. Write the first paragraph and introduce the topic.

3. Compare and contrast the three logical arguments in this lesson to prove the existence of the Hereafter. How do they compliment each other?

4.2 Maʿād in the Qurʾān

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define and explain the significance of the belief in *Maʿād*.
- Correlate the belief in the Hereafter with the choices we make in this lowly world *(dunyā)*.
- Define *Tajassumul Aʿmāl* and provide examples of it in our daily lives.
- Summarize the characteristics of Heaven and Hell based on verses from the Qurʾān.

MAʿĀD
Resurrection and life in the hereafter

TAJASSUMUL AʿMĀL
Embodiment of our actions

HEAVEN
The blessings of Allah ﷻ experienced without any punishment

HELL
Pure punishments without the enjoyment of any blessings

OVERVIEW

The belief in *Maʿād* (the Resurrection and life in the Hereafter) is one of the fundamental beliefs in Islam. The Qurʾān places great emphasis on the topic of *Maʿād* (the Hereafter). More than 2000 verses of the Qurʾān speak about life in the Hereafter; and many of them mention this belief right after the belief in Allah ﷻ. Examples include:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَـٰذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُم بِاللَّـهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

"And when Ibrāhīm said: 'My Lord, make this a secure town, and provide its people with fruits—such of them as have faith in Allah and the Last Day.'" [1]

لَّيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَـٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّـهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces to the east or the west; but (true) righteousness is [personified by] those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day…" [2]

In order to better understand the Hereafter, in this lesson we will explore verses of the Qurʾān regarding various aspects of the afterlife, including the practical importance of belief in the Hereafter, some different names for the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell, and the embodiment of our actions.

PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE HEREAFTER

The Qurʾān mentions a number of reasons for why the Hereafter, and belief in the Hereafter, makes an important difference in how we go about living our lives.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 126.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 177.

Activity 4.2a: Living the Qurʾān!

Read the below verses, and for each verse, explain how belief in the Hereafter can make a difference in how we live our lives in this world. The first one has been done for you.

Verse 1:

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ۝

"Do you think that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought back to Us?" [3]

This verse shows how belief in the Hereafter gives us a purpose and goal to work toward in this life. Our lives take on an important purpose: to prepare for ultimate success in the Hereafter. With belief in an everlasting afterlife, we avoid laziness and procrastination. We feel compelled to set and accomplish important goals, and to always be striving for improvement and perfection.

Verse 2:

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَـٰذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ۚ
وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۗ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ۝

"And the book (record of deeds) will be set up. Then you will see the guilty concerned about what is in it. They will say: 'Woe to us! What a book this is! It omits nothing, big or small, without enumerating it.' And they will find present whatever they have done, and your Lord does not wrong anyone." [4]

VERSE 3:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ۝ إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّـهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا ۝
إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِن رَّبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا ۝

"And they give food in spite of love for it [could be love of the food, or out of love for Allah] to the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner, [saying]: 'We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We desire no reward from you, nor thanks. Indeed, we fear for our Lord a frowning and fateful Day.'" [5]

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verse 115.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 49.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Insān (76), Verses 8-10.

Answer key at the end of the lesson

Activity 4.2a: Living the Qurʾān! (Continued)

VERSE 4:

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ۝ وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَو وَّزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ۝
أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَـٰئِكَ أَنَّهُم مَّبْعُوثُونَ ۝ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

"Woe to the defrauders who use short measures, who, when they measure [a commodity bought] from the people, they take the full measure (of it), but diminish [give less] when they measure or weigh for others. Do they not know that they will be resurrected on a tremendous Day, (the) Day when humankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds?" [6]

VERSE 5:

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ۝ فَذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ ۝ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ۝

"Have you seen the one who denies the Judgment (Retribution)? That is the one who drives away the orphan; and does not encourage the feeding of the poor." [7]

VERSE 6:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ۝

"Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made pleasing to them their deeds; so they wander about blindly (in distraction)." [8]

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn (83), Verses 1-6.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʿūn (107), Verses 1-3.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Naml (27), Verse 4.

VERSE 7:

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّـهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ۝

"Only those would ask permission [of exemption from battle] from you who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, they waver in their doubt." [9]

VERSE 8:

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ مُبْتَلِيكُم بِنَهَرٍ فَمَن شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَن لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ ۚ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۚ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَاقُو اللَّـهِ كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّـهِ ۗ وَاللَّـهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝

"As Saul (Talūt) set out with the troops, he said: 'Indeed, Allah will test you with a stream: anyone who drinks from it will not belong to me, but those who do not drink from it will belong to me, except the one who draws a scoop with his hand.' But they [all] drank from it, except a [very] few of them. So when he crossed it along with the faithful who were with him, they said: 'We have no strength today against Goliath (Jalūt) and his troops.' But those who were certain that they would encounter Allah said: 'How many a small party has overcome a larger party by the permission of Allah; and surely Allah is with the patient ones." [10]

9 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9), Verse 45.
10 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 249.

NAMES FOR THE HEREAFTER

The Qurʾān mentions a number of names for the Hereafter and the Day of Judgment. These names are important to reflect on because each of them teaches us about an important aspect of the afterlife.

Activity 4.2b: Find the Meaning

Look up the meaning of the following names used for the Hereafter in the below verses in the Noble Qurʾān. What does this name tell you about the next life? How should reflecting on this name affect our life practically?

1. Sūrah at-Taghābun (64), Verse 9

2. Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75), Verse 1

3. Sūrah al-Qāriʿah (101), Verse 1

4. Sūrah az-Zalzalah (99), Verse 1

5. Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah (88), Verse 1

HEAVEN AND HELL

Life in this world is filled with blessings and trials. But in the Hereafter, trials and punishments will be separated into one type of existence, while the blessings of Allah ﷻ will be separated into another. Therefore, it is possible to summarize Heaven and Hell as follows:

HEAVEN (JANNAH) IN THE QUR'ĀN

- The Qur'ān refers to Heaven with various different names, some of which include: *Jannah* (Garden or Heaven); *Dār as-Salām* (the Abode of Peace and Safety); and *Firdaws* (Paradise).
- Its area (or according to some interpretations, its width) is the size of the skies and the earth.
- Heaven has already been prepared for the pious ones *(muttaqīn)*.
- It has multiple levels. According to some *aḥādīth*, the lowest level is such that everyone will be able to see it, and whichever direction you look, there will be a distance of a thousand years. As well, there are eight doors, and the distance from one door to another is a path of 40 years.
- The Qur'ān refers to two types of blessings in Heaven:
  - ▷ **Outward blessings:** such as fruits, homes, rivers, clothing, adornments, thrones, servants, goblets, companions, etc.
  - ▷ **Spiritual blessings:** such as the Pleasure of Allah ﷻ—*Riḍwān*; the special Mercy of Allah ﷻ—*Raḥmah*; Proximity to Allah ﷻ—*Qurbah;* not hearing any vain talk, not feeling any weariness, no enmity or hatred, and the constant glorification of Allah ﷻ.

HELL (JAHANNAM) IN THE QUR'ĀN

- The Qur'ān refers to Hell with various different names, some of which include: *Jahannam* (Hell); *Saqar* (something that transforms things and melts them); *Jahīm* (a big Fire with intense flames); *Sa'īr* (a burning blazing Fire); *Ḥuṭamah* (a burning Fire that breaks everything in it).
- It has seven levels/doors. According to a *ḥadīth* of Imām 'Alī ؑ, the seven entrances will not be like doors, but rather they will be levels on top of one another.
- Space in Hell is very limited, but despite that, people will still be commanded to enter into it and Hell will find room for them.
- The Qur'ān refers to two types of punishments in Hell:
  - ▷ **Outward punishments:** such as the flames of the Fire, the noise of the Fire that will increase fear, chains, noxious gas, boiling water, food from the tree of *Zaqqūm* that will cause the burning to intensify, charred clothing, devilish companions that the people of Hell will wish they could get rid of, but they will not be able to.
  - ▷ **Spiritual punishments:** which will be more painful than physical ones. This will include the exposure of one's deeds for others to witness, regret over not making better choices in this world, and utmost humiliation.

STOP AND REFLECT: Based on what you have read about Heaven and Hell, why do you think that so many people are still not concerned about the Hereafter? Do you think that hearing the descriptions of Heaven and Hell will help them with their overall faith *(īmān)*?

TAJASSUMUL A'MĀL - EMBODIMENT OF OUR ACTIONS

Allah ﷻ teaches us in the Qur'ān that the rewards or punishments which we will receive for our actions in this world are not separate from the actions themselves, but rather they are the reality or the manifestations of the actions that we perform. This concept is known as *Tajassumul A'māl*, meaning that our actions take on a form or body that we will be able to see on the Day of Judgment—we will live our deeds along with their effects.

Activity 4.2c: Making Connections

A number of verses demonstrate this concept of manifestation of our actions—*Tajassumul Aʿmāl.* In groups of three, for each of the verses below, discuss how this verse describes the connection between the actions we perform in this world and our reward or punishment in the Hereafter. Be prepared to discuss your group's answers with the class.

VERSE 1:

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِن سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّـهُ نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَاللَّـهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ۝

"The Day when every soul will find present whatever good it has done; and as for the evil it has done, it will wish there were a far distance between it (the evil deed) and itself. And Allah warns you to beware of [disobeying] Him, and Allah is All-Kind to [His] servants." [11]

VERSE 2:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا ۖ وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا ۝

"Indeed, those who consume the property of orphans wrongfully only ingest fire into their bellies, and soon they will enter a Blazing Fire." [12]

11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 30.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 10.

Answer key at the end of the lesson

VERSE 3:

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّـهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُم ۖ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ ۖ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخِلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَلِلَّـهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَاللَّـهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۝

"And let the stingy not suppose that [their withholding] what Allah has given them out of His bounty is good for them; rather, it is bad for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection. And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is (fully) Aware of what you do." [13]

VERSE 4:

إِنَّا أَنذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنتُ تُرَابًا ۝

"Indeed, We have warned you of a punishment near at hand—the Day when a person will observe what their hands have sent ahead, and the disbeliever will say: 'Oh, I wish that I were dust!'" [14]

13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 180.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nabaʾ (78), Verse 40.

The verses we explored regarding *Tajassumul Aʿmāl* demonstrate that rewards and punishments are the reality of the actions we perform. This understanding is different from a system in which rewards and punishments are "transactional"—similar to a bank account where good deeds and bad deeds increase or decrease the total value of the account. The understanding that we will meet with the reality of our actions in the Hereafter should give us more motivation to ensure that we do good deeds and avoid evil ones.

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you think it helps to know that our actions do not just go away when they are performed, but rather their reality is preserved and will be present with us in the Hereafter?

Activity 4.2d: Review Questions

1. What does the story of Saul (Talūt) [see Verse 249 of Sūrah al-Baqarah (2) quoted in the lesson above] demonstrate about the importance of having faith in the Hereafter?

2. How does Verse 4 of Sūrah an-Naml (27) demonstrate the importance of the Hereafter?

3. Look up the entire translation of Verse 177 of Sūrah al-Baqarah (2).

   a. Write out the translation of this verse.

   b. Explain how this verse shows the connection between belief in the Hereafter, and caring about others.

4. Look up Verse 56 of Sūrah az-Zumar (39).

   a. Write out the translation of this verse.

   b. Explain what type of punishment is described here.

5. Look up Verse 6 of Sūrah at-Taḥrīm (66).

   a. Write out the translation of this verse.

   b. Explain how this verse could be used to demonstrate the concept of *Tajassumul Aʿmāl*.

Activity 4.2d: Review Questions (Continued)

6. Look up Verses 7 and 8 of Sūrah az-Zalzalah (99).

   a. Write out the translation of these two verses.

   b. Explain how these verses could be used to demonstrate the concept of *Tajassumul Aʿmāl*.

Activity 4.2e: Spiritual Connectors

1. How can a person use the concept of *Tajassumul Aʿmāl* to make more careful life choices?

2. How does this concept take notion with the friends you choose in life? How will the friends you have in this world impact the company you will have on the Day of Judgment and thereafter?

Activity 4.2a: Answer Key

1. (Already done under the verse).
2. Belief in the Hereafter keeps us concerned with performing good deeds and staying away from bad deeds.
3. Those who believe in the Hereafter are keen to sacrifice for others.
4. They do not cheat anyone.
5. They protect the vulnerable ones in society.
6. Belief in the Hereafter provides true comfort to the heart, and prevents a person from being bewildered or purposeless.
7. Belief in the Hereafter provides strength in one's heart and firm resolve.
8. Those who believe in the Hereafter are patient, and are certain of their encounter with Allah ﷻ.

Activity 4.2c: Answer Key

1. The good or evil actions that a person performs will be present (in their real form) on the Day of Judgment. The evil deeds will be so bad that their doer will long to be far away from them.
2. The reality of the misdeed of misappropriating the wealth of orphans is likened to swallowing fire into one's stomach.
3. People who hold back in giving what they should do are loading and chaining themselves down.
4. We will see the (reality of) deeds we performed in this world on the Day of Judgment.

THE BIG QUESTION:

CHAPTER 5

Perceiving Our Purpose

5.1 The Purpose of Creation

5.1 The Purpose of Creation

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Answer the question: Why did Allah ﷻ create human beings? utilizing key terms from the lesson including the concept of *ʿUbūdiyyah* and the special Mercy of Allah ﷻ.
- Identify how various Qurʾānic verses mentioned in this lesson guide us toward understanding the purpose of creation, and how related verses *(āyāt)* and narrations *(aḥādīth)* can be understood in this framework as well.
- Compare and contrast the general and special Mercy of Allah ﷻ and apply this concept to real world situations.

JORDAN: According to you, there is One God who is Needless of everything and everyone. He is:

- Self-Sufficient
- All-Knowledgeable
- All-Powerful
- One who does things on the basis of wisdom (meaning that He does not do things randomly without a purpose, or for the purpose of harming others; thus, everything He does is with a reason, and that too—a good reason)

So why would such a God need to create anything? The fact that He created things means that either He needs something from His creations, or He did something for no reason—both of which you would say are impossible. Therefore, for what purpose did God create everything?

ME: In order to understand the purpose of creation, we are going to turn to the Qurʾān for guiding our reasoning. You do not have to accept what the Qurʾān says as you may not believe in this Divine Book, but you can follow the logical argument that it presents.

VERSE 1:

*"It is He Who created **for you** everything that is in the earth…"* [1]

This and other verses in the Qurʾān tell us that everything in the earth has been created for humankind. Throughout centuries, human beings have slowly discovered some of the mysteries and wonders of this world, and have harnessed them for their own use in areas such as transportation, communication, and engineering. This in itself is an example of how Allah ﷻ created everything in the earth for the benefit of humanity.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 29.

VERSE 2:

"He is the One Who created death and life to test you to see who has the best of deeds…" [2]

This verse tells us that the process of living in this world for a period of time and then leaving it through death is for a purpose—and that purpose is to see who can perform the best of deeds. This verse also emphasizes the **quality** of our deeds over quantity. What are some of the best deeds that a person can perform?

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some very good deeds that you can perform? Why would quality matter over quantity if you need more good deeds to attain a higher status?

VERSE 3:

"And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except to worship Me." [3]

The word *'liyaʿbudūn'* (ليعبدونِ) in this verse which means 'to worship Me' is not just ritual worship, but rather a broader meaning which encompasses living our entire lives in a way that pleases Allah ﷻ—in other words, servitude to the Almighty—being an *ʿAbd* of Allah ﷻ at all times, which is known as *ʿUbūdiyyah*. This means that in everything we do—whether it be the way we eat, drink, socialize, clothe ourselves, earn an income, govern our societies, etc., we find out what is the most pleasing to Allah ﷻ and then act accordingly.

STOP AND REFLECT: This verse tells us that the purpose of our creation is to attain a state of worship and servitude to Allah ﷻ. But why does Allah ﷻ need this from us?

VERSE 4:

"Indeed, Allah is Needless (Ghanī) of all the worlds (and everything therein)." [4]

Allah is the ONLY One who is Needless *(Ghanī)*, and All-Praiseworthy *(Ḥamīd)*.

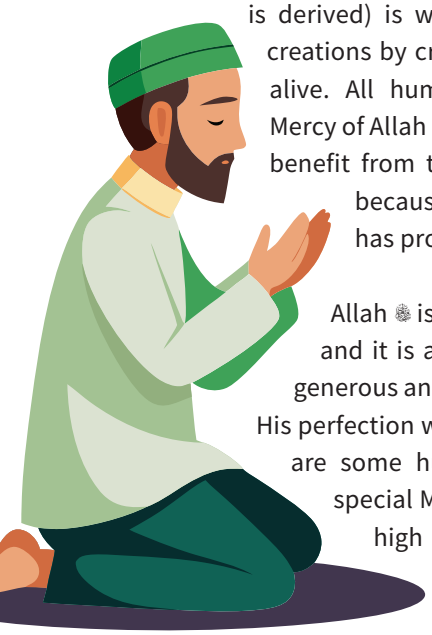
Allah's existence is necessary, meaning that His Being is part of His Essence; and He never needs anything else, but everything else is dependent upon and needy of Him. This means that Allah ﷻ does not need our worship. On the other hand, He is All-Praiseworthy *(Ḥamīd)* meaning that whatever He does deserves praise. His creating us deserves praise, therefore it has a purpose. You would not praise someone for doing something just because—there has to be a good reason behind why Allah ﷻ created us so that He may deserve praise for it.

STOP AND REFLECT: Would Allah ﷻ have been considered to be stingy if He did not create?

2 Noble Qur'ān, Surah al-Mulk (67), Verse 2.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51), Verse 56.
4 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 6; (with similar, but slightly different wordings in: Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 267; Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 8; Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 12, Sūrah at-Taghābun (64), Verse 6).

VERSE 5:
"Except those that your Lord has mercy (raḥima) upon; and it is for that, He has created them." [5]

The verb *raḥima* comes from the word *raḥmah*, which means 'mercy.' The Mercy of Allah ﷻ is divided into two parts: general and special. These two parts are indicated when Muslims say: *Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm*—In the Name of Allah, the All-Kind, the All-Merciful. General mercy (from which *ar-Raḥmān* is derived) is what Allah ﷻ gives to all of His creations by creating them and keeping them alive. All human beings enjoy the general Mercy of Allah ﷻ when they breathe, eat, drink, benefit from the rain, etc., and need to live because of all the provisions that He has provided to humankind.



Allah ﷻ is infinitely beautiful and perfect, and it is a necessary consequence of His generous and merciful nature that He shares His perfection with those who deserve it. There are some human beings who receive the special Mercy of Allah ﷻ because of their high level of God-consciousness *(taqwā)*, and being on the path to attain a state of worship to Allah ﷻ [see Verse 3 above]. The special Mercy of Allah ﷻ (indicated by the name *ar-Raḥīm*) shows itself in many ways, some of which include: Guidance toward the truth, inspiration to remember Him, inclination toward worship, inspiration to seek repentance, an ability to tolerate difficulties, having inner tolerance to be patient with others, an ability to recognize one's faults and work toward improving them, developing certainty about the existence of Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter, having a special connection with Allah's chosen representatives [the Prophets and the Imāms ﷺ].

From the verses above, we understand that Allah ﷻ created us so that we can worship Him and earn His special Mercy in doing so.

One may ask that: Why does Allah ﷻ show some people His special Mercy, but not others? The reason is not because He is stingy, miserly, or selfish, and does not want to share that mercy. Rather, only some people have the capacity to receive that special Mercy, while others do not. A person's capacity to receive His special Mercy depends on the level of servitude that one has.

An example to help us understand this is the following: Imagine that it is raining outside. There is a group of people who are very thirsty and they are given water bottles of various sizes to collect water from the falling rain. They all go outside. Some of them decide to hold their water bottle upside down. Others hold them at various angles, while a few hold them upright. At the end, there will be some people who have no water, others who will have a little bit of water, while others whose water bottles will be entirely full. Even those who collected a full water bottle will have different amounts depending on the capacity and sizes of their bottles.

STOP AND REFLECT: Reflect carefully over your own approach toward being a servant (an *ʿAbd*) of Allah ﷻ. Is there anything you could do to allow yourself to receive more of the special Mercy of Allah ﷻ? What is preventing you from attaining that?

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Hūd (11), Verse 119.

THINK, PAIR, WRITE

THINK: Take five minutes to independently reflect on the questions below. Be sure to write down any notes in the space provided.

- What are some ways that a person can receive more special Mercy from Allah ﷻ?
- Is it unfair that some people have access to more of this special Mercy from Allah ﷻ than others?

PAIR: In the next 7-10 minutes, discuss your thoughts with a partner. Did your partner offer a new perspective? Or were your answers quite similar? Be sure to take notes below.

WRITE: In the next 5-7 minutes, formulate a well thought out paragraph based on your own reflections, as well as your discussion to answer the above questions. Reflect on this: Through taking the path of servitude to Allah ﷻ, one will receive more "water" and also increase one's "capacity" to receive this "water."

Going back to the question of why Allah ﷻ created human beings, there is one more step to cover. Allah ﷻ created human beings so that they can worship Him and receive His special Mercy. Yet there are those who do not worship Him. He did not, however, create us because of those people. Rather, He created human beings for the sake of the perfect human beings who must exist as examples for those whom Allah ﷻ fills with His most special and complete Mercy.

To better understand this, take the example of a carpenter. It is their job to make products from wood. In the process, there will be many scraps of wood generated, however, the presence of these scraps do not detract from the final product.

There is a *Ḥadīth Qudsī* in which Allah ﷻ said to His final Messenger ﷺ: *"Had it not been for you, I would not have created the universe."* [6]

If it were not for the existence of this perfect human being—Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—one could object and say that Allah ﷻ created the entire universe, but then held back and was stingy about sharing His Mercy.

VERSE 6:
"...And if you turn away (refuse to accept the truth), then He will replace you with other people who will not be like you." [7]

From this verse and others, we understand that Allah ﷻ has a purpose behind creating human beings—He wants them to reach perfection, and receive His special Mercy. Perfection here means to be the best version of oneself by manifesting the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and once a person does this, they will be worthy of receiving His special Mercy. If they turn away from this, then Allah ﷻ does not need them, and He will create others who will be better.

6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 40, P. 18.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Muḥammad (47), Verse 38.

Activity 5.1a: Review Questions

1. Give an example of the special Mercy of Allah ﷻ other than those already provided in this lesson.

2. Quote and analyze the below statement from *Ḥadīth al-Kisāʾ* where Allah ﷻ states the reason for His creating the universe in relation to the position of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ:

   "And the Almighty says to you [the Noble Prophet]: 'I did not create the extended land, the glowing moon, the shining sun, the revolving planets, the flowing oceans, or the moving ark except for your sake and for your love.'"

Activiity 5.1a: Review Questions (Continued)

3. Think of a specific example which shows how the rest of creation has been created for the benefit of human beings. Do research on this example and explain how human beings discovered this blessing, and how they have benefited from it. Complete the worksheet below with your information.

TOPIC:

a. Why is this considered to be a blessing?

b. How was it discovered by human beings?

c. Find some narrations *(aḥādīth)* or verses *(āyāt)* to support this.

FIQH
(ISLAMIC LAWS)

CHAPTER 1

Taqlīd and Taklīf

1.1 Taqlīd

1.2 Philosophy of Islamic Laws

1.1 Taqlīd

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the rules of following a *marjaʿ*.
- Explain and understand the process of reaching a ruling.
- Develop the concept of *taqlīd,* and look at the importance of *taqlīd* in Islam.
- Identify the need for a *marjaʾ* and historical perspectives of *taqlīd*.

In previous years, we discussed that as Muslims we are trying to get closer to Allah ﷻ and be on a path to perfection. In Allah's infinite Wisdom, He gave us a map/set of instructions for us to follow so that we can know how to get closer to Him. Everything in Islam is for our own benefit and helps us on this path.

Allah ﷻ has given us two primary guides on this path: the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Since we do not have direct access to our present, living 12th Imām عجل to ask him questions directly during this time, religious scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* are our connection to the *Maʿṣūmīn* during this time when we do not have direct access to any of them.

Scholars play a very important role in conveying the knowledge of the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ to us. That is why Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

> "The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets." [1]

In previous years, we looked at the rules of following a *marjaʿ (taqlīd)* and how to access their rulings, as well as the conditions that a *marjaʿ* must have.

Activity 1.1a: Pre-Reading Reflection

List the rules of following a *marjaʿ*. How would you advise a friend who currently does not have a *marjaʿ* to guide them in selecting one?

In this lesson, we will discuss some of the common objections or questions raised in relation to *taqlīd*, as well as take a brief look at the process that a *marjaʿ* has to undertake in order to come to understand the Islamic rulings from the Noble Qurʾān, and the actions or words of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

1 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, P. 773.

FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON TAQLĪD

There are a number of questions or objections posed against *taqlīd*. Here, we will discuss some of these.

1. Why should someone who is educated and is an 'intellectual' blindly follow a marjaʿ? Can they not come to conclusions about religious matters themselves?

Activity 1.1b: Making Connections

Consider the following scenarios, and think about how the same concept might apply to follow a *marjaʿ*. Complete the following worksheet before reading on.

1. Consider the example of a medical student. We see that a student studies a minimum of between five to seven years at a college or university. Then they begin training in a hospital as a resident or an intern for two to three years. By the end of their residency, they have had around ten years of education in their field. However, despite this, they are often still required to discuss their diagnosis and treatment plan with a more senior doctor who has had more experience, and has specialized in a particular field of medicine. Often a doctor-in-training may come to the wrong diagnosis, or offer a treatment plan that is not completely correct despite a decade of studying, sitting exams, and observing other doctors.

   How does this concept also apply to following a *marjaʿ*? What do you think is the biggest difference between getting second or third opinions on a medical diagnosis, and consulting different *marājiʿ* for religious questions?

2. A patient who has no prior knowledge about medicine searches their symptoms on Google, reads a little bit about their traits online, and becomes confident that they know what is wrong with them. They come to a qualified, specialist doctor who has had many years of training, and simply asks for the treatment they found online that will seemingly treat their problem.

   What is dangerous about this above scenario? How is it just as dangerous spiritually for someone to do this in regards to their religion?

3. What is another example you can think of which would help emphasize the importance of having *marājiʿ* guide us in spiritual matters? Write it below.

When a person comes across a question related to Islamic rulings, they sometimes overestimate their ability to deduce the correct conclusion. They may have a basic level of Islamic knowledge or may have briefly researched the topic online. Often due to a person's expertise in other fields, they may put too much confidence in their intellectual abilities. This person then feels that they are qualified to come to a conclusion on Islamic rulings and they do not need to refer to a *marjaʿ* on these issues or other issues.

Just as a patient who googles one's symptoms puts oneself in grave danger of being treated for the wrong illness, a person who depends on one's own basic knowledge of Islam and refuses to follow the rulings of a *marjaʿ* puts oneself in grave danger of going off the correct path to their perfection, and ending up somewhere quite harmful.

In contrast, a person who follows a *marjaʿ* performs one's duty and keeps oneself safe. Following a *marjaʿ* is the instruction we have received for the

period of the occultation of our 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. Even with the slim chance that a *marjaʿ* may not be correct in a ruling they have reached, we have done our duty and responsibility as instructed by Allah ﷻ and the immaculate Imāms عليهم السلام to follow them.

2. Why have we been instructed to follow only one marjaʿ and their rulings?

STOP AND REFLECT: Before continuing to read, think about why we are only allowed to follow one *marjaʿ* and predominantly follow their rulings?

At various times throughout history, there was one scholar who was widely acknowledged to be one who most fit the criteria for being a *marjaʿ*, more so than any other scholar at that time. For example, during his time, Shaykh Murtaḍa Anṣārī (who died in 1864) was the most knowledgeable and capable person of deriving Islamic rulings from the sources, and he fulfilled all the other conditions for being a *marjaʿ*. But there are also time periods in which two or more scholars have been considered to be at the same level of qualification. This is not an uncommon phenomenon in various fields and sciences. For example, there may be one person who is considered a world expert on a topic in medicine. There may also be two people, or several people, who are all considered to be in the top tier.

When selecting a *marjaʿ*, it is important to follow a valid process of either:

1. Consulting experts who understand the Islamic Sciences and can determine who the qualified *marājiʿ* are, or
2. Speaking to other learned people who have gone through this process to understand their findings.

We have to have conviction that we followed a proper process to identify a *marjaʿ*. However, the process may lead us to understand that two or more *marājiʿ* are at the same level, and on a particular issue, they may have differing *fatwā*.

The process of selectively following different top-level *marājiʿ* is called *tabʿīḍ*.[2] According to *tabʿīḍ*, we are allowed to follow any of the *fatāwa* of the *marājiʿ* who are the same level.

So, for example, one *marjaʿ* may rule that playing chess with other people is forbidden *(ḥarām)*, while another may rule that it is permissible *(ḥalāl)* if it is not done with betting, and as long as chess is not considered to be an instrument of gambling in that society. In this case, one could follow the rulings of the first *marjaʿ* on a number of issues, but for this issue the person can follow the ruling of the second *marjaʿ*.

How can this be applied practically? If we know that there are multiple *marājiʿ* at the same top tier, then for most issues, we can simply follow the rulings of any one of them (in most cases, the rulings will be the same). But we do know there are some issues on which the *marājiʿ* differ, so it would be good to research the opinions of the various *marājiʿ* and decide which we will follow. These include issues such as: whether *khums* is applicable on gifts or not, some of the specific details regarding the *ḥijāb* of women, playing chess, the purity and uncleanliness *(ṭahārah* and *najāsah)* of non-Muslims who are not from the *Ahlul Kitāb*, the necessity of washing the right side of the body before the left side in *ghusl*, and the conditions for being able to follow someone in congregational prayer.

Once someone has followed a *marjaʿ* on a particular issue for which that *marjaʿ* has a *fatwā*, then one cannot switch to the *fatwā* of another *marjaʿ* on that same issue—even on the basis of *tabʿīḍ*. [This is different than when one *marjaʿ* has given a ruling based on obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāt wājib)*, and allows their followers to follow the *fatwā* of the next most learned *marjaʿ*. This is allowed at all times].

Shaykh Murtaḍa Anṣārī (1781–1864. Buried in Najaf, Iraq)

2 Some of the *marājiʿ* explicitly allow *tabʿīḍ*. Others have said it should be avoided, but since their opinion is given on the basis of precaution *(iḥtiyāt)*, they also give permission to follow the rulings of others in this regard.

Activity 1.1c: Scenarios

Consider the following scenarios and note whether an individual must follow the ruling of their *marjaʿ*, or if they can follow the *fatāwa* of another *marjaʿ* at the same level (assuming that this is the first time they are doing *taqlīd* on these issues).

The following are some resources that we can refer to while considering these scenarios:

- http://www.moulanaonline.com/
- http://www.askthesheikh.com/
- www.islamquest.net

1. Go to askthesheikh.com. Using the search bar, search 'life support' and click the first link.
   a. What is the general ruling from both Āyatullāh Sīstānī and Āyatullāh Khamenei about turning off life-support?

   b. What is the major difference in their ruling?

   c. Considering this difference, how might the concept of *tabʿīḍ* apply in this situation?

2. Refer to the rulings of *khums* on gifts for both Āyatullāh Sīstānī's (Ruling 1770) and Āyatullāh Khamenei's (Q. 847) websites.

   a. Write each of the rulings below.

   b. Assuming I follow Āyatullāh Sīstānī in general and choose to follow Āyatullāh Khamenei's rulings in regards to gifts when I am calculating *khums* in 2021, can I change which rule I follow the following year when calculating *khums*? Why not?

3. Find a ruling of either Āyatullāh Sīstānī or Āyatullāh Khamenei that mentions obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāt wājib)*.

   a. What does obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāt wājib)* mean based on this?

   b. How is this different from the concept of *tabʿīḍ*?

3. Is taqlīd a new concept, or was it practiced or encouraged by the Imāms ﷺ?

The Imāms ﷺ had the practice of appointing some of their learned students to give rulings, and instructing laymen to follow them. For example, Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ said to his trusted companion Abān ibn Taghlib: *"Sit in the masjid in Medina, and give rulings to people. For I love to see the likes of you among my followers (Shīʿah)."* [3]

There are a number of other situations where the Imāms ﷺ would refer their followers to learned companions; one such person was Zurārah. The criterion for giving rulings was knowledge. The following narration implies this:

> "Be wary not to give rulings to people without knowledge. Whoever gives rulings to people without knowledge, on them will be the curse of Allah and the angels." [4]

Moving forward in history, our scholars from the past to the present time are almost unanimous about the permissibility—in fact the obligation—of *taqlīd* on ordinary people. This is why Shaykh Ṣadūq, one of our earliest great scholars, gave his book the title of: *'Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh'* which means 'For the one who has no access to a scholar.' This meant that he saw his book as a reference for laymen who wanted to learn rulings from knowledgeable scholars. Individuals such as Shaykh Ṭūsī, ʿAllāmah Ḥillī, and Shahīd al-Awwal were great scholars of different generations, and all agreed on the necessity of *taqlīd* and unanimity of all scholars on the topic.

4. There are narrations that condemn the practice of taqlīd. How can we explain this?

These narrations do exist. However, they are referring to following the wrong people who are unqualified to be followed. The following narration makes this very clear:

Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydah narrates that Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said to him: *"Are you more strict in practicing taqlīd or are the Murjiʿah (a deviant group)?"* I said: *"They practice taqlīd and so do we."* He said: *"The Murjiʿah established in a position of leadership a man who was not worthy to be followed and they followed him. You have established in a position of leadership a man whom you are obligated to follow, but you have not followed him. Therefore, they are practicing taqlīd more than you."* [5]

In fact, it was the extreme group of the *Khawārij* who were against the concept of following any human being on any religious issue. The narration below is a discussion between some of the *Khawārij* and a companion of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. The end of the narration clearly shows that following someone who is following Allah ﷻ [i.e. explains to us the rules of Allah ﷻ] is permissible:

3 Al-Najāshī, Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī, *Rijāl an-Najāshī*, Pp. 7-8.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 2, P. 308.
5 Shaykh Kulayni, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 53.

When ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ sent Ṣaʿṣaʿah ibn Ṣawḥān to the *Khawārij,* they asked him: *"If ʿAlī was here with us, would you be with him?"* Ṣaʿṣaʿah replied: *"Yes."* So they told him: *"Then you are following ʿAlī when it comes to your religion. Go back, for you have no religion."* Ṣaʿṣaʿah said to them: *"Woe to you, should I not follow the one whom Allah has given authority to? This is the best following."* [6]

We see from this discussion that *taqlīd* is a necessary obligation, and a logical and important part of practicing our faith.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Take a moment to think about how many aspects of our daily life are determined by whom we do *taqlīd* to. Without *taqlīd*, what parts of religion would become very confusing if left up to our own judgments? Discuss your list with a partner, then take some time to do an independent quick write further explaining how doing *taqlīd* allows us to practice our faith on a daily basis with more ease.

THE PROCESS OF ANALYTICAL JURISPRUDENCE

The Process of Reaching a Ruling

When a qualified scholar (*mujtahid* or *marjaʿ*) is faced with a Jurisprudential question, they go through a very complex and difficult process in order to reach an answer. At every step, there are several factors that must be taken into consideration, and a *mujtahid* must have adequate knowledge of many sciences in order to go through this process.

Here, we will take a very brief look at the process of reaching a ruling. It must be emphasized that this is only a brief review of the steps, and by no means takes into account all the complexities of the process:

- Analyzing the Noble Qurʾān to find any references for that issue. For example, if the question at hand was *"How should wuḍū be performed?"* then the following verse would be a main reference:

> "O you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer, wash your face and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your head and your feet up to the ankles." [7]

- When looking at the Qurʾān, a qualified scholar does not simply look at one verse and give a ruling. They have to look at the entire Qurʾān and take into consideration all the verses related to that issue. This means that they need to know which verses are established and which are ambiguous, and which verses are general and which are limited.

6 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, Vol. 1, P. 121.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 6.

For example, when it comes to the question *"Is wine prohibited to consume?"* the Qurʾān has a number of verses in regards to this issue. A qualified scholar would have to use their understanding of the Sciences of the Qurʾān to come to the conclusion that Allah ﷻ gradually prohibited the consumption of wine. Thus, the verse totally forbidding wine was the last to be revealed (in relation to this issue), and therefore it overrides all the other verses. The verses relating to wine are quoted below in the order of revelation—from first to last:

- ▷ *"And from the fruits of date-palms and grapes, you derive a strong drink [this was before the order of the prohibition of the alcoholic drinks] and a good provision. Indeed, in that is a sign for people who reason."* [8]
- ▷ *"They ask you concerning alcoholic drinks and gambling. Say: 'In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for people, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit.'"* [9]
- ▷ *"O you who believe! Do not approach the prayer while you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you are saying…"* [10]
- ▷ *"O you who believe! Verily, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful…"* [11]

- The next step is to analyze the *aḥādīth*—narrations from the final Prophet ﷺ and the 12 Imāms ؑ. A qualified scholar has to have knowledge about the main compilations of the narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, and search these for references to the questions at hand. For example, if the question was *"Can a person fast while traveling?"* the following narration would be a main reference point:

An authenticated narration of Sumāʿah ibn Mihrān from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ is as follows: *"I asked him about fasting while traveling, and he said: 'One should not fast while traveling. Some people fasted while traveling during the life of the Messenger of Allah, so he called them the disobedient ones. Therefore, a person should not fast while traveling, except for the three days during Ḥajj that Allah, the Exalted and Glorified, mentioned.'"* [12]

- When looking at any narration, a scholar needs to analyze the following things:
  - ▷ The chain of the transmitters, who must be authenticated and known to be trustworthy narrators.
  - ▷ The content of the narration. It must be free from any contradictions, must not go against the Noble Qurʾān, or against established Islamic principles.
  - ▷ The authenticity of the source referenced in which the narration is found.
- Often, an authentic narration may explain a verse of the Qurʾān and give further understanding of it.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Naḥl (16), Verse 67.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 219.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 43.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 90.
12 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 10, P. 200.

- Sometimes, narrations may seem to give conflicting evidence. In this case, a scholar must seek to compromise the apparently conflicting evidence using several established principles. Examples of how to compromise between narrations include:
  - ▷ Is one general and one specific?
  - ▷ Is one unconditional and one limited?
  - ▷ Is one more in agreement with the Noble Qurʾān?
  - ▷ Is one possibly an example of dissimulation *(taqiyyah)*?
- Having analyzed the Noble Qurʾān and the narrations, if a scholar finds no reference to the question at hand, then they can resort to the following:
  - ▷ Unanimity *(ijmāʿ)* amongst scholars. For example, in the question of whether the elbow itself should be included in the washing during *wuḍūʾ*, the evidence from the Noble Qurʾān and the narrations does not give a clear answer. However, all scholars are unanimous that the elbow should be included, and a qualified scholar can give a ruling based on the conviction they have that the scholars of the past who have this unanimity had access to convincing evidence that supported this ruling.
  - ▷ Referring to certain procedural principles that are derived from the Noble Qurʾān and the *Sunnah* (traditions) which can be used in the absence of textual evidence. An example of these principles is one called *'istiṣḥāb.'* When a person is uncertain about a particular issue, this principle allows one to carry past certainty about the same subject and apply it to the present. For example, if someone is certain that they performed *wuḍūʾ,* but now is not sure if their *wuḍūʾ* has become void or not, then they can bring their previous certainty regarding having performed *wuḍūʾ* to the present, and assume that their *wuḍūʾ* is still valid.
  - ▷ The practice of the Followers of the Legislation which is referred to as *Sirāt al-Mutasharriʿīn*. If there is no evidence from the Noble Qurʾān or any narrations, then a qualified scholar can refer to the practice of abiding Muslims from the past to come to an answer. If Muslims have practiced something over so many generations, since the time of the Imāms ﷺ, then there is no possible source for this practice other than the instructions or practice of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, so a scholar can rule according to this practice. It may be that in reality there was an instruction from one of the Imāms ﷺ regarding this, but it was later lost or destroyed.

Differences in Rulings

At times, rulings reached by various scholars may be different. The differences are often minor, but they do exist. This may be due to several factors; for example, two scholars may:

- Believe in different principles when it comes to authenticating transmitters of narrations.
- Differ in how to give preference of one piece of textual evidence over another.
- Vary in the way they understand or interpret the textual evidence.

We often see differing opinions amongst experts even in empirical sciences, where the evidence is tangible and experimental. Therefore, it is natural for there to be differences amongst experts in jurisprudence as well. These differences should be respected and understood. Each scholar is doing their best and performing their duties before Allah ﷻ in trying to reach the correct conclusion, and it is our responsibility to follow the ruling of the one whom we have concluded is the most knowledgeable.

We should not criticize scholars because of the differences in their rulings, and we should not inflame tensions between their followers. We are each bound to select a *marjaʿ* whom our research indicates is the most qualified, and then follow their rulings. We do not need to enter into arguments or debates about various rulings. This is because we often do not understand the complexity of the process in deriving these laws, and we often do injustice toward the scholars. Furthermore, these debates can become heated and cause disunity amongst the community.

Ultimately, we must respect the qualified scholars and their sincere efforts, and maintain our duty in following these rulings. Even if their conclusions were not entirely correct in reality, we will not be accountable before Allah ﷻ because we fulfilled our obligations that we were instructed to perform. At the same time, we have to respect the differences in practice amongst people, and try to make the best of it.

Activity 1.1d: Review Questions

1. In bullet points, list the process that a *marjaʿ* has to take in order to form a ruling (according to this lesson).

2. Why is it important to follow a *marjaʿ* and not attempt to follow the rulings as you see fit?

3. Can a *ḥadīth* be used if it goes against the Noble Qurʾān? Why or why not?

4. What advice would you give a friend who is unsure about *taqlīd*? What is the most convincing factor?

Activity 1.1e: Informative Essay

Using the bullet points you made in review question 1 from the above activity, and write a three paragraph informative essay about the process that a *marjaʾ* undertakes in order to reach a ruling.

Use the following rubric to guide you.

	1 - INEFFECTIVE	2 - SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 - CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE	4 - HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the essay.
Focus and Details	The topic and main ideas were not clear.	The main idea was somewhat clear, but lacked supporting evidence.	The main idea was very clear, however supporting evidence and details were lacking.	There was a clear and focused main idea supported by ample details and evidence.
Voice/Intent	Writer's voice or intent of writing was not apparent.	Writer's voice/intent was somewhat apparent, but left the audience with many questions.	Writer's voice was strong with a clear purpose, but still left the audience with some questions.	Writer's voice and knowledge on the topic was strong and fully addressed all the necessary questions.
Accuracy	Content presented was not accurate or compelling.	Content presented contained much misinformation and lacked quality.	Content presented was mostly accurate, and demonstrated some quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and accurate.
Teacher's Comments:				

1.2 Philosophy of Islamic Laws

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the role of Islamic Laws in guiding human beings toward achieving the purpose of their creation.
- Familiarize ourselves with some of the *aḥādīth* of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ regarding the importance of learning about Islamic Laws.
- Review terminology regarding the evidence and philosophy behind Islamic Laws.
- Examine the role of equity, justice, and equality in Islamic Laws, and the wisdom behind differences in select laws based on gender.

PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC LAWS

Last year, we learned some answers to basic questions about Islamic Laws and its philosophy. We are now going to look at the philosophy of Islamic Laws a little deeper.

IMPORTANCE OF ISLAMIC LAWS

Intuition dictates that we need to be guided in life as to (a) what is the goal of life, and (b) how to get there. The set of teachings from our Creator that tell us where we came from, what our goal is, and how to get there is called **Islam**. That is why Islam is a complete way of life.

Islam teaches us that our final destination is the return to Allah ﷻ, therefore Muslims need to learn how to get there in the best manner possible. The way to get to that destination is through the *Sharīʿah*—the Laws of Islam. Following the Laws of Islam is following a path toward Allah ﷻ.

Every Law in Islam is there for a reason and it helps us toward getting to our goal. The Qurʾān states that the religion of Islam is the (only) complete and perfect religion.[1] There is no law or rule in Islam which is "just because."

The teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ emphasize the great importance of learning the religion of Islam and acting upon it. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ says:

> "Learning something about what is permissible *(ḥalāl)* and forbidden *(ḥarām)* from one who speaks truthfully is better than the entire [material] world and whatever gold and silver lies within it." [2]

A companion of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said to him: *"I have a son who wishes to ask you about what is ḥalāl and ḥarām, but he will not ask you about things which are not important."* The Imām ﷺ replied: *"Is there anything better than ḥalāl and ḥarām that people can ask about?"* [3]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ also said: *"Shame on a Muslim who does not dedicate one day a week to learn about their religion and ask (questions) about it."* [4]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 19.
2 Al-Barqī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, *Al-Maḥāsin*, Vol. 1, P. 299.
3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 1, P. 213.
4 *Al-Maḥāsin*, Vol. 1, P. 255.

REASON BEHIND ISLAMIC LAWS

There are two "reasons" behind why Islamic Laws are the way they are:

1. *ʿIllah* or *Dalīl* (علة/دليل) which means the "proof or evidence" behind an Islamic Law. Islamic Laws are derived from three sources: (1) the Qurʾān, (2) the *Sunnah* (traditions) of the Prophet ﷺ and narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and (3) the intellect *(ʿaql)*. The proofs tell us about the evidence of the Laws in the Qurʾān, *Sunnah*, or intellect.

   For example: *Ḥajj* is obligatory *(wājib)* once in the lifetime of a person as soon as one is mature and able to go.

   How do we know that it is *wājib*? In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: *"And it is the duty of humankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House for those who can afford the journey to it."*[5] Based on this verse, and other evidences we have, we know that *Ḥajj* is obligatory as has been stated.

2. *Ḥikmah* or *Falsafah* (حكمة/فلسفة) which means the "philosophy behind the Law." How does this law help us, or prevent harm from reaching us?

   For example: Why do we have to pray? In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: *"Indeed, the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs, and the remembrance of Allah is surely greater."*[6]

From this verse, we understand three points of wisdom behind the *ṣalāh,* and why we have been obligated to pray:

1. Praying prevents indecencies,
2. Praying prevents sins,
3. Praying can help us remember Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important for someone to follow the laws completely, not just partially?

Regarding the importance of following Islam completely, the Qurʾān says: *"O you who believe! Enter into Islam completely (and perfectly), and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; indeed, he is an open enemy of yours."*[7]

Purposely staying ignorant about a law is not a valid excuse for not following the Islamic Laws. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Allah, the Exalted, will ask His [rebellious] servants on the Day of Resurrection: 'My servant, were you learned [about the ḥalāl and ḥarām]?'"* If the servant says: *"Yes,"* then Allah ﷻ will say to them: *"Then why did you not act upon what you knew?"* If the servant says: *"No, I was ignorant,"* then Allah ﷻ will say to them: *"Why did you not learn such that you could act [accordingly]?"*[8]

EQUITY VS. EQUALITY IN ISLAMIC LAWS

Since some Islamic Laws have different provisions for males and females, the question is sometimes asked: *If Allah ﷻ is Just, then how can His religion discriminate on the basis of gender?*

The answer—in brief—is that Allah ﷻ is Just, and His religion is also based on fairness and justice. Justice however, does not mean equality in all cases.

Let us look at this issue in a bit more detail.

Men and Women are Equal in the Eyes of Allah ﷻ

On a spiritual level, men and women have been created with the same potential for perfection. Allah ﷻ beautifully says in the Qurʾān: *"And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and has faith, will enter Paradise and will not be wronged [even as much as] the speck of a date seed."*[9]

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl-ʿImrān (3), Verse 97.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 45.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 208.
8 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Amālī al-Mufīd,* P. 227.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 124.

Islam acknowledges only two factors for superiority: God-consciousness *(taqwā)* to the extent that one is aware of Allah ﷻ and is careful about their responsibilities toward Him; and knowledge *(ʿilm)* that a person endeavors to acquire. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

> "…Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (God-conscious) of you."[10] He also says: "…Are those who know equal to those who do not know…?"[11]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think about the verses mentioned above. How do these verses establish the measure for differentiation in the eyes of Allah ﷻ? Discuss with a partner, and be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. Write down any other answers that you come across during your pair and share.

Factors that other cultures or people may look upon as tokens of superiority such as: gender, wealth, nobility of birth, and popularity hold no real value.

Equality versus Equity

Even though there are minute differences in the details of some Islamic laws, on the whole, men and women have the same amount of privileges and rights. Regarding women, Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"…and they have rights similar to those against them [that men possess] in a just manner…"*[12] As well, the verse: *"Men shall have the benefit of what they earn, and women shall have the benefit of what they earn,"*[13] shows that both men and women have the right to earn and own their own property.

However, there are variations in some areas of law due to physical differences, and differentiations in roles/responsibilities between men and women and society. In such cases, Justice in the Law calls for equity, NOT equality.

One example of this is in the rules of inheritance. Generally speaking, according to Islamic Law, a woman gets one-third of the inheritance from her parents, whereas a man gets two-thirds. This is usually the case, however there are exceptions. For example, when a person who has children dies, and their parents are alive, the mother and father both receive an equal amount from the inheritance of their child. If someone dies, and their father and daughter are the only living inheritors, the daughter will receive more of the inheritance than the father.

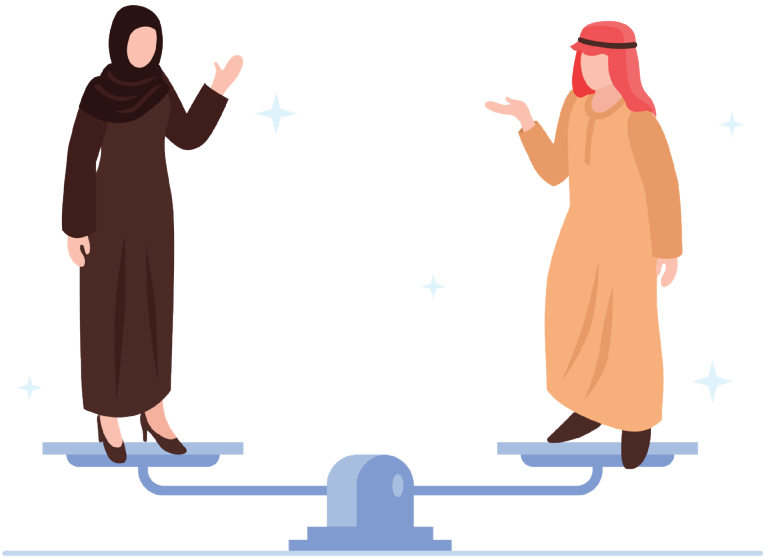
At first glance, it may seem that the law is 'unfair' because usually the man receives more than the woman. However, when looked at from an overall perspective, the law actually benefits and is just to both men and women.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 13.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 9.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 228.
13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 32.

One of the reasons for the difference in inheritance amounts is because in Islam, it is a husband's responsibility to provide for his wife and children. When one generation passes away, the wealth is inherited by the next generation. According to Islamic Law, from this wealth, generally speaking two-thirds goes to men and one-third to women. The two-thirds portion that men inherit must be spent for the welfare of the entire family, whereas women have no obligation to share their one-third. So even though men are put in charge of two-thirds of the wealth, it is women who actually receive two-thirds of the wealth [by holding on to their one-third share, and at the same time benefiting from the two-thirds that goes to men].

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said:

> "The share of the females in the inheritance, is half that of the males because when a female enters into marriage she receives [her dowry money], while the male is obliged to give something. In addition, it is the responsibility of the males to shoulder the expenses of the females, whereas the females are neither responsible for their own expenses, nor that of the males." [14]



ANSWERS TO STOP AND REFLECT:

a) Islam means [total] submission which means that we, as slaves of Allah ﷻ, look to Him for instructions, then we obey them. One who picks and chooses is not submitting to the Almighty; they are setting up another master alongside Allah ﷻ which is a form of polytheism.

b) Allah ﷻ wants us to worship Him the way that He wants us to worship Him, not the way we want to worship Him.

c) When trying to reach a goal where we are not familiar with the path to that goal, we need to follow instructions carefully, or else we will perish along the way.

14 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 101, P. 326.

Activity 1.2a: Review Questions

1. Define the terms: *Sharīʿah, ʿIllah,* and *Ḥikmah.*

2. Quote a tradition (not mentioned in this lesson) from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ that speaks about the importance of learning Islamic Law. Source the tradition.

3. Compare and contrast the proof behind and the philosophy of Islamic Laws.

4. Does the question about equality versus equity in Islamic Law pertain to proof or philosophy behind Islamic Laws? Why?

5. Does Islam discriminate based on gender? If so, when and how?

Activity 1.2b: Dialogue

Use the points learned in this lesson to write a 5-7 line dialogue you might have with someone who thinks that Islam does not give women any rights, and does not treat them equally. In your dialogue, be sure to explain the difference between equality and equity, and include the standards that Islam looks at. Remember to use respectful language.

Activity 1.2c: Inheritance Calculator

1. Go to **https://inheritance.islamica.org**. This application is an Islamic inheritance calculator. Go to Menu/Settings, and select one of the *marja'*s for the purpose of this assignment.

For the first scenario, imagine that you yourself were to leave this world. Enter your name for the deceased, and proceed to fill out the information for your family. In the potential inheritors screen, click on each of the pieces of the pie chart to fill in the required information. Then, press the results button. Take a screenshot of what you see, and include it as the response to this question.

Note: If you are not comfortable revealing the details of your actual family structure, then you can put in fictitious information.

2. From the scenario in #1, what did you learn about the different allocations based on gender in the Islamic Laws for inheritance?

3. Now, using the same calculator, include a screenshot that shows the results of the following scenario:

A Muslim mother passes away due to a natural death, leaving behind only her Muslim father and her Muslim daughter as her living inheritors.

4. From the scenario in #3, what did you learn about the different allocations based on gender in the Islamic Laws for inheritance?

CHAPTER 2

Purity and Spirituality

2.1 Religion vs. Spirituality

2.2 Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, Tayammum

2.1 Religion vs. Spirituality

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand typical characteristics of a "spiritual-but-not-religious" person.
- Identify the root cause of this movement in the modern day lifestyle, and why instead of turning to religion, such individuals turn to a personal, individual spirituality.
- Explain the Islamic perspective on spirituality.

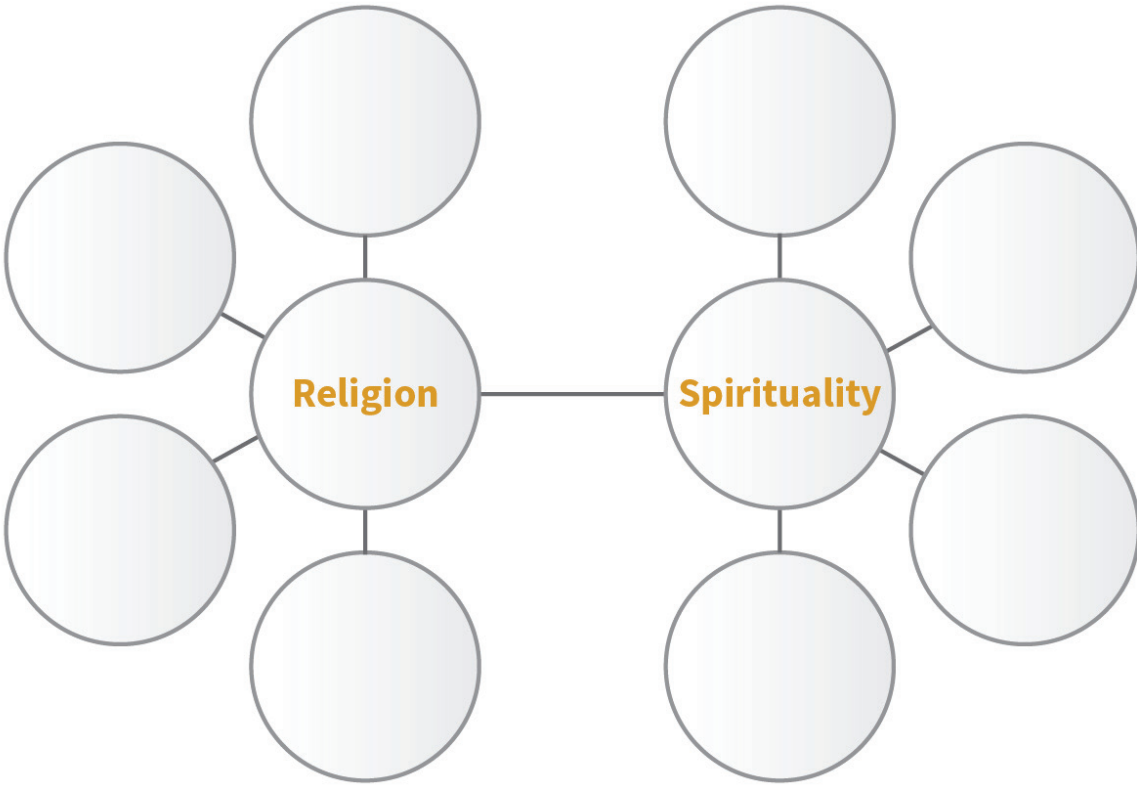
RELIGION VS. SPIRITUALITY

Activity 2.1a: Word Connections

Contemporary Social Connotations of Religion vs. Spirituality

Although the two terms, **religion** and **spirituality**, are closely linked and perhaps overlap in many ways, the two words have come to be attached to somewhat different social sentiments.

Reflecting on the ways in which contemporary society has attached certain emotions, buzzwords, or perspectives to each of the terms, complete the graphic organizer below with the social connotations associated with the words '**religion**' and '**spirituality**.' Complete each bubble with an associated buzzword, viewpoint, or phrase that you have frequently seen attached to the center term.



Is the overall social connotation for each word positive or negative? Place a checkmark in the table below according to your analysis.

OVERALL SOCIAL CONNOTATION OF TERM	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Religion		
Spirituality		

Activity 2.1b: Reflection

Consider the words religion and spirituality. Is one term inherently more positive than the other? Has there been a shift, or are the terms equal in the view of society today? If the terms are not equal in connotation, then what might be the reason for heralding one term/concept over the other? Do you think these social connotations are incidental or intentional?

Imaginary Dialogue

This is an imaginary dialogue between a practicing Muslim, Zaynab, and a modern-day "spiritual" person whom we have given the name Judy to.

Judy: It seems that you are a person who is committed to a religion. My parents raised me as a practicing Catholic, but I have moved on beyond religion. Now, I am a spiritual person, but do not believe in any religion as such.

Zaynab: What do you mean when you say that you are spiritual, but not religious?

Judy: Well, I love to do yoga and meditate, and that makes me feel spiritually connected.

Zaynab: Why did you move away from religion?

Judy: For me, I found religion to be:

1. **Outdated and limited:** The major religions of the world came a long time ago and were meant for specific people. Times have changed since then, and I wanted something that is more compatible with a modern lifestyle, especially in the Western world.
2. **Not pluralistic enough:** After moving into my dorm in university, I met a great group of friends who are all spiritual, but in their own ways. Some listen to wild music, others beat drums when it rains, and one of them even twirls round and round muttering something repeatedly. A few of them find solace in drugs…I know, they should not be doing that, but they are so…spiritually inspiring. Religion boxes you into only one way of doing things.
3. **Impossible to understand:** There are so many people who interpret every religion in a bunch of different ways: conservative, liberal, orthodox, fundamentalist, modern, revisionist, etc., so there is no way of knowing who is right and wrong!
4. **Too distant:** I am part of the Tiktok generation, so I need things done instantly. You cannot tell me to follow certain practices that I will get rewarded for at an unspecified time in the future—that too, way after I die! Modern life is so fast paced and challenging, I need to have a spiritual connection right here and now!

But this is what I think and believe. I do not want to impose any of my thinking upon you. If your religion works for you, then that is great.

Activity 2.1c: Dialogue with a Modern-Day Spiritualist

Individual Activity: Based on the dialogue above, how would you analyze Judy's perspective on spirituality vs. religion?

1. Why does Judy use the expression "moving beyond" religion?

2. If asked, how would she likely define "feeling spiritual?"

3. Why does she feel that religion boxes you into doing things?

4. What is the main reason that Judy needs her spirituality?

5. How does modern life make someone feel the need to connect to something beyond this material world?

6. Why do you think she picked yoga and meditation as her means of being spiritual?

7. Why did she say that she does not want to impose her thinking on Zaynab?

Activity 2.1d: Class Activity

As a class, discuss your analysis of Judy's perspective on spirituality vs. religion. Note that there are key lessons to be learned in answering these questions, and students will be responsible for knowing them.

Activity 2.1e: Reflection Activity
Spirituality in the Modern Sense

Can you brainstorm a list of modern forms of spirituality that have been segregated from religious affiliation? For example: Yoga, Mindfulness, Zen, etc.

Connecting the Root Practice to an Existing Religion
Connecting the Root Practice to an Existing Religion
Connecting the Root Practice to an Existing Religion
Connecting the Root Practice to an Existing Religion

Extension: For each of the spiritual forms you came up with, could you trace the root practice back to an existing religion? If so, which one(s)? Record the religion of origin next to the practice in your graphic organizer.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think a previously religious practice might be rebranded as a spiritual one?

Potential Responses a Muslim Could Give

The following exchange offers a hypothetical dialogue between Zaynab—a Muslim, and Judy—a spiritual, yet non-religious person, in which Zaynab is able to logically refute Judy's arguments.

Zaynab: Thank you for sharing your views. I have quite a different perspective. Actually, true spirituality can be found only in religion!

Judy: What do you mean by "true" spirituality? Is there something like false spirituality?

Zaynab: Yes! Religion is a path that is meant to give someone access to the hidden world. Islam teaches us that this material world, known as *dunyā*, is the lowest world. Beyond this realm, there are other spiritual realms. In order to access those realms, and eventually come to know Allah, or God, or the One who possesses ultimate Beauty and Perfection, we need a path, and that path is religion.

There are other things someone can do to feel good inside, like the things you and your "spiritual" friends do. But many of these forms are a temporary means of escaping from reality. They do not give an understanding to fundamental questions like why are we here, what is our goal, and how do we get there. The problem with those forms of "spirituality" is that you yourselves are the ones who choose what you think is right for you. Imagine that we all were on a plane which had to do an emergency landing in the middle of a snowy land. After we get out of the plane, the captain announces: "Let's get moving! We have to run in order to survive! Just run!" Then everyone just starts to run in any direction. Some may fall into a crevice; others may be injured from not knowing the path; and others may think that they are going in the right direction, but they are actually running in the opposite direction from a safe haven! If there is no guidance, then no one will go to the correct place of safety.

You said it yourself that some of your friends do drugs, and that is wrong. There are others in the world who commit unjustified acts of violence, or have indecent, immoral relationships as a way of attaining "spirituality"—surely, those ways cannot be right either!

Religion teaches us a way to embrace the reality of this world, and shows us the correct and safe way to interact with others, and worship God in the proper manner so that one can enter the spiritual realms. In a God-sent religion, it is not the individual who chooses what is best, but rather the Creator who sets the guidelines.

Judy: Well, theoretically that sounds good…but practically there is no religion that I can turn to for spirituality, because of all the flaws I mentioned earlier!

Zaynab: It seems that many of your problems stem from a lack of knowledge about Islam. Islam is the ultimate and most complete system of guidance from Allah ﷻ. It is a religion which spans all times and places, for which Allah ﷻ sent a Divine Book—the Qurʾān—that is free from any error; along with guides to preserve, explain, and exemplify the teachings of this Book.

Islam teaches us that the acts we perform, and even our intentions and thoughts, have an immediate impact on our soul. Someone who performs righteous deeds and stays away from evil deeds for the sake of Allah ﷻ will access true spirituality, right here and now—although they will see the **true** results of their actions in the Hereafter. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

> "Whoever acts righteously, whether male or female, while they are a believer, We will surely cause them to live a good life; and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do." [1] The Almighty also says: "No doubt, the hearts find rest (and are at peace) in the remembrance of Allah!" [2]

If there is a Muslim who does not feel spiritually connected, then the problem does not lie with Islam, but rather it points to an area of weakness in that Muslim. They might be living an imbalanced life, or be overly engaged with the worldly pursuits, to the extent that they are unable to connect with their God-seeking true inner self (their *fiṭrah*). They might be unaware of the depth and richness of Islamic practices, such as the daily prayers, supplications, self-awareness and attentiveness *(murāqabah)*, self-accounting *(muḥāsabah)*, charity, and having healthy relationships with family and community. Or, their sins may prevent them from tasting the sweetness of their good actions.

The best creations of Allah ﷻ—Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—are the most perfect examples we know of truly spiritual people. They had the deepest connection to Allah ﷻ and the spiritual world, yet they were practical and lived the most upright and righteous lives in this world.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Surah an-Naḥl (16), Verse 97.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 28.

Activity 2.1f: Review Questions

1. Is it really possible to be "spiritual," but not religious?

2. There are several different religions, and within these religions there are various sects and/or schools of thought. Is there any way of really knowing what is right and wrong?

3. In religion, who chooses what someone needs to do in order to enter the spiritual realms? In spirituality without religion, who makes this decision?

4. Why has the typical lifestyle in the modern era led to more depression and unhappiness, especially if there are so many different ways of becoming "spiritual?"

Extension Activity: Spiritual Experience Without the Responsibility

For additional information and further study, watch this sermon, then respond to the reflection questions below:

Spiritual but not Religious–Shaykh Murtaza Bachoo - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ur7TPToXQe8

Before Watching:

1. What does spirituality mean to you? When you think of spiritual experiences, what kind of experiences are you thinking about?

2. Do you define your profound experiences based on your emotional connection to the experience, or on how it has changed/impacted your life?

SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ur7TPToXQe8

During Watching:

3. How does Shaykh Murtaza explain the concept of spiritual sight as a faculty of the soul? What is the effect of spiritual sight on human experience?

4. Do you agree that a true spiritual path will also be filled with sorrow or fear? Give an example of either emotion being attached to a spiritual experience.

Activity 2.1f: Answer Key

1. Is it possible to be "spiritual," but not religious? Now, consider the inverse scenario.
   a. It depends on how you define "spirituality." If spirituality is feeling good inside, then there are a lot of things a person can do to feel spiritual that do not have to do with religion. But according to Islamic teachings, true spirituality is not about just feeling good inside, or temporarily escaping from reality. True spirituality is to perform righteous deeds and stay away from evil deeds for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

2. There are several different religions, and within these religions there are various sects and/or schools of thought. Is there any way of really knowing what is right and wrong?
   a. There is a way to know what is right and wrong is by using logic. If a religious argument is based on logically sound premises, then it can be accepted. But if it involves bypassing logic and believing "just because," then it cannot be accepted. The religion of Islam—in particular the Shīʿah school of thought—is based on five principles (the *Uṣūl ad-Dīn*), all of which are based on logic.

3. In religion, who chooses what someone needs to do in order to enter the spiritual realms? In spirituality without religion, who makes this decision?
   a. In religion, it is Allah ﷻ who chooses the path to spirituality and the higher realms; however, in spirituality without religion, it is the individual who chooses what makes one feel good.

4. Why has the typical lifestyle in the modern era led to more depression and unhappiness, especially if there are so many different ways of becoming "spiritual?"
   a. The typical lifestyle in the modern era has led to more depression and unhappiness because advancement in technology and the modern lifestyle focus only on material needs. A human being consists of a body and a soul. Meeting the needs of the body while ignoring the soul can lead to great disappointment in life, depression, and a feeling of worthlessness.

2.2 Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, Tayammum

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn and memorize the recommended *duʿāʾ* for *wuḍūʾ.*
- Explain and understand the spiritual role of water in connection to *wuḍūʾ, ghusl,* and *tayammum.*
- Explain and understand the different situations where *wuḍūʾ* is required.
- Review the rulings of *wuḍūʾ.*

WUḌŪʾ

In this lesson, we will focus on the deeper insights of *wuḍūʾ* and its significance. Much of what we will discuss regarding *wuḍūʾ* also applies to *ghusl* as well. Before we begin, an important principle to remember is that Allah ﷻ, often commands us to perform external physical acts in order to symbolize a spiritual process that we should be going through internally. Since it is difficult for us to conceptualize or control the spiritual process, Allah ﷻ, allows us to perform a similar physical process. If we perform this physical process correctly, then He, by His infinite Mercy, allows the spiritual process to occur more easily, and thus we reap the benefits of both the physical and spiritual process. There are many examples of this in Islam, some of which include *Ḥajj, ghusl, tayammum,* and others. One of the major examples is *wuḍūʾ*.

THE GATE TO A SACRED MEETING

As stated by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the daily prayers are a spiritual ascension of a believer to one's Lord. There are many prerequisites that lead to this ascension, and *wuḍūʾ* is one of them.

Our prayers are like a fortress in which there is a sacred, secret meeting place between a person and the Almighty Creator. This fortress has doors which must be protected. If they are left open or broken, then the sacred meeting with Allah ﷻ cannot take place. *Wuḍūʾ* is one of these doors. If carried out correctly, then the door to the fortress will be closed from intruders who might otherwise disturb this sacred meeting. Furthermore, performing *wuḍūʾ* with knowledge and understanding will fortify this door.

THE SPIRITUAL ROLE OF WATER

Allah ﷻ created water as the substance that enables life and cleanses dirt and filth. Water is a mercy and blessing from Allah ﷻ. When we perform *wuḍūʾ*, we are approaching water as the purifier of our external body, and a manifestation of Allah's mercy to purify our hearts from sins and the evils of Satan.

When we have a meeting with important people, we try our best to be presentable and be in our most perfect state. There is no doubt that the most important and beloved One to all believers is Allah ﷻ. Therefore, when we want to "meet with Him" during our prayers, it is only right that we approach Him with a clean body and a pure heart. This is what we can achieve through performing *wuḍūʾ*. Our body parts must be clean because we will be worshiping Allah ﷻ with them; but more importantly, our heart must also be purified because it is the center of our love and faith in Allah ﷻ.

Wuḍūʾ also symbolizes the purification of our body and heart before our "major meeting" with Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment. The daily prayers serve to remind us about that day. That is why it is highly recommended for us to recite the different supplications when we are performing *wuḍūʾ*. In these supplications, we are beseeching Allah ﷻ to brighten our faces on the Day of Judgment, to give us our Book of Deeds in our right hand and not in our left, to encompass us with His Mercy and Forgiveness, and to keep our feet firm on the Bridge which we will all have to cross on that Day. Once we have asked Allah ﷻ for these things, we proceed to stand in His presence as if we are standing in His presence on the Day of Judgment.

STOP AND REFLECT:

1. Why do we have to clean ourselves in the form of *wuḍūʾ*, *ghusl,* or *tayammum* before prayers? What does this symbolize?
2. What is the spiritual role of water?

WHEN WUḌŪʾ IS REQUIRED

There are certain times when it is obligatory *(wājib)* to be in the state of purification, and one of the main ways to attain this is by performing *wuḍūʾ*. These instances include:

- When offering our daily prayers.
- When touching the script of the Qurʾān in Arabic if there is direct skin contact.
  - ▷ This rule does not apply if there is a barrier between our hand and the text of the Qur'ān (like a glove).
  - ▷ This rule does not apply if we are touching the screen of a smartphone or device that is displaying the Qur'ān text on it.
- When touching the Names of Allah ﷻ (in any language).
- When touching the names of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ:
  - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Khamenei: It is an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)* to have wuḍūʾ.
  - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī: It is a recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to have *wuḍūʾ*.

There are certain instances when it is recommended *(mustaḥab)* for a person to be in the state of *wuḍūʾ*, some of these include:

- Before any act of worship, such as reciting the Qurʾān or a *duʿāʾ*.
- Before going to sleep.

Activity 2.2a: Charting

Fill in the chart with some different activities that would require *wuḍūʾ*, and mark whether it is obligatory *(wājib)* or recommended *(mustaḥab)* to be in this state of purification.

ACTIVITY	OBLIGATORY *(WĀJIB)*	RECOMMENDED *(MUSTAḤAB)*

Besides the above times, there are many narrations which indicate that it is highly rewarding to be in a state of *wuḍūʾ* as much as possible.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

> "Increase the times in which you are in the state of wuḍūʾ. If you do this, then Allah will prolong your life. If you can remain in a state of wuḍūʾ during the entire day and night, then do so." [1]

A beautiful habit we should endeavor to develop in our lives as much as possible is that whenever our *wuḍūʾ* is voided, we try to renew it again. Good deeds such as these will bring about many blessings in our lives, and may prolong it as well.

1 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth# 4106.

THE DUʿĀʾ FOR WUḌŪʾ

There is a *duʿāʾ* which has been narrated from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ that is recommended to recite at each stage when a person is performing *wuḍūʾ*.[2] Reciting these *duʿās* will increase the reward of performing *wuḍūʾ*. They also remind us about the various stages of the Day of Judgment that we will all have to pass through.

When a person's eyes fall on the water, it is recommended for the one who is performing *wuḍūʾ* to recite the following:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ وَ بِاللّٰهِ، وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْمَاءَ طَهُوراً وَّ لَمْ يجْعَلْهُ نَجِساً

Bismil lāhi wa billāh, wal ḥamdu lillāhil ladhī jaʿalal māʾa ṭahūraw, wa lam yajʿalhu najisā.

"In the Name of Allah and by Allah, all praise is for Allah who made water pure, and did not make it impure."

When washing the hands before performing *wuḍūʾ*, one should say:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ وَ بِاللّٰهِ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Bismil lāhi wa billāh, allāhummajʿalnī minat tawwābīna waj ʿalnī minal mutaṭahhirīn.

"In the Name of Allah and by Allah. O Allah! Make me among those who often repent and make me among those who purify themselves."

When rinsing the mouth, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَقِّنِي حُجَّتِي يَوْمَ أَلْقَاكَ، وَ أَطْلِقْ لِسَانِي بِذِكْرِكَ

Allāhumma laqqinnī ḥujjatī yawma alqāk, wa aṭliq lisānī bidhikrik.

"O Allah! Make my argument [of faith] available to me on the Day [when] I meet You, and make my tongue fluent with Your remembrance."

When rinsing the nose, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا تُحَرِّمْ عَلَيَّ رِيحَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَ اجْعَلْنِي مِمَّن يَّشَمُّ رِيحَهَا وَ رَوْحَهَا وَ طِيبَهَا

Allāhumma lā tuḥarrim ʿalayya rīḥal jannah, waj ʿalnī mimman yashammu rīḥahā wa rawḥahā wa ṭībahā.

"O Allah! Do not deprive me of the fragrance of Paradise, and make me among those who smell its fragrance, its breeze, and its perfume."

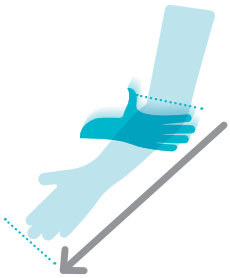
2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 3, P. 70.

When washing the face, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَـيِّضْ وَجْهِي يَوْمَ تَسْوَدُّ فِيهِ الْوُجُوهُ، وَ لَا تُسَوِّدْ وَجْهِي يَوْمَ تَـبْـيَضُّ الْوُجُوهُ

Allāhumma bayyiḍ wajhī yawma taswaddu fīhil wujūh, wa lā tusawwid wajhī yawma tabyaḍḍul wujūh.

"O Allah! Brighten my face on that Day when [some] faces will be darkened, and do not darken my face on that Day when [some] faces will be brightened."

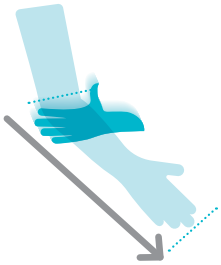


When washing the right arm, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَعْطِنِي كِتَابِي بِيَمِينِي، وَ الْخُـلْدَ فِي الْجِنَانِ بِيَسَارِي، وَ حَاسِبْنِي حِساباً يَّسِيراً

Allāhumma aʿṭinī kitābī biyamīnī, wal khulda fil jināni biyasārī, wa ḥāsibnī ḥisābay yasīrā.

"O Allah! Give me my Book [of Deeds] in my right hand, and (give me) a permanent stay in Paradise with ease, and account me [for my deeds] with an easy accounting."

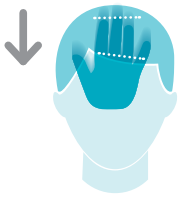


When washing the left arm, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا تُـعْطِنِي كِتَابِي بِشِمَالِي، وَ لَا مِن وَّرَاءِ ظَهْرِي، وَ لَا تَجْعَلْهَا مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِي، وَ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِن مُّقَطَّعَاتِ النِّيرَانِ

Allāhumma lā tuʿṭinī kitābī bishimālī, wa lā miw warāʾi ẓahrī, wa lā tajʿalhā maghlūlatan ilā ʿunuqī, wa aʿūdhu bika mim muqaṭṭaʿātin nīrān.

"O Allah! Do not give me my Book [of Deeds] in my left hand, nor from behind my back, and do not chain my hand to my neck; and I seek refuge with You from the garments of Hellfire."



When wiping the head, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ غَشِّنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَ بَـرَكَاتِكَ وَ عَفْوِكَ

Allāhumma ghashshinī biraḥmatika wa barakātika wa ʿafwik.

"O Allah! Envelop me in Your Mercy, Your Blessings, and Your Pardon."

When wiping the feet, one should say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ ثَـبِّتْنِي عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ يَوْمَ تَزِلُّ فِيهِ الْأَقْدَامُ، وَ اجْعَلْ سَعْيِي فِيمَا يُـرْضِيكَ عَنِّي، يَا ذَا الجَلَالِ وَ الْإِكْرَامِ

Allāhumma thabbitnī ʿalaṣ ṣirāti yawma tazillu fīhil aqdām, waj ʿal saʿyī fīmā yurḍīka ʿannī, Yā Dhal Jalāli wal Ikrām.

"O Allah! Keep me firm on the path on that Day when the feet shall stumble, and let my efforts be in those things that make You pleased with me, O Possessor of Majesty and Bounty!"

STOP AND REFLECT: What aspects of the Day of Judgment are mentioned in this supplication? Why is the recitation of this *duʾāʾ* important in order to enhance the spiritual impact of a person's *wuḍūʾ*?

Activity 2.2b: Class Activity–Kahoot Quiz

Review of the Rules of Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, and Tayammum

Over the last few years, we have learned many rules related to *wuḍūʾ, ghusl,* and *tayammum.* To review these rules we will go through the Kahoot quiz (link in sidebar) which will test your knowledge in regards to these rules.

KAHOOT QUIZ

https://create.kahoot.it/share/08-08-03-wudu-ghusl-tayammum/ccc174ac-87ca-495a-97b4-8874ce7bc850

Activity 2.2c: Create a Poster

Your little brother is learning how to perform *wuḍūʾ*. He is having a hard time remembering the specific *duʿāʾ* during each step of the *wuḍūʾ* process. Create a poster for him outlining each step of *wuḍūʾ* with a short description of what to do. Under each step, write the specific *duʿāʾ*.

Make sure your poster includes:

- A drawing of each step of *wuḍūʾ.*
- A short description of how to complete each step.
- The portion of the *duʿāʾ* for each step if applicable.

CHAPTER 3

Ṣalāh

3.1 Further Rules of Ṣalāh

3.2 Humility in Ṣalāh

3.1 Further Rules of Ṣalāh

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn how to perform various other types of prayers, such as *Ṣalātul Āyāt* and *Ṣalātul Mayyit.*
- Learn the different types of doubts that can occur while praying, and which doubts invalidate the prayer.
- Learn how to rectify our *ṣalāh* when doubts occur.

In previous years, we learned how to perform the obligatory daily prayers. Today, we will learn how to pray *Ṣalātul Āyāt* and *Ṣalātul Mayyit* which are slightly different in their format. We will also review the conditions of prayer when a person is traveling. As well, we will discuss some of the rules of how to deal with doubts that might arise while offering our prayers.

For each section of this lesson, your teacher will provide a practical demonstration, in addition to reviewing the various rules.

ṢALĀTUL ĀYĀT (PRAYER OF THE SIGNS)

This is a prayer that must be recited when certain natural signs take place. *Ṣalātul Āyāt* becomes obligatory when one of the following four events occur:

1. Solar Eclipse.
2. Lunar Eclipse.

This prayer becomes obligatory even if the moon or the sun are partially eclipsed, and even if they do not cause any fear.

3. An earthquake.[1]
4. Any abnormal natural phenomenon that causes fear for the majority of people[2] (for example, a very violent storm).

Method of Ṣalātul Āyāt

There are two methods of performing this prayer. In this lesson, we will learn the shorter one.

Ṣalātul Āyāt consists of two *rakaʿāt*, and in each *rakʿah,* there are five *rukūʿ*. It is performed in the following sequence. Your teacher will also demonstrate how to pray this prayer practically.

1. *Nīyyah* (intention).
2. *Takbīratul Iḥrām* (first *Allāhu Akbar* in the *ṣalāh* which begins the actual prayer).
3. Recite all of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.
4. Recite one *āyah*, or a part of an *āyah*, from a Sūrah (e.g. *Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm,* along with the first *āyah* of Sūrah al-Falaq or Sūrah al-Qadr, etc.). *"Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm"* on its own is not sufficient for this recitation. The next *āyah* (or a portion of it) should also be included.
5. Then perform *rukūʿ*.
6. Then stand up after *rukūʿ* and recite the next *āyah* of the sūrah.
7. Then perform a second *rukūʿ*.

1 Āyatullāh Sīstānī: Obligatory Precaution; Āyatullāh Khamenei: Obligation.
2 Āyatullāh Sīstānī: Recommended Precaution; Āyatullāh Khamenei: Obligation.

8. This should be repeated five times.
9. Stand up straight after the fifth *rukūʿ*.
10. Go into *sujūd* and complete the *rakʿah* as you normally would.
11. Then stand up to perform the 2nd *rakʿah* in the same manner as above.
12. After the 10th *rukūʿ* is complete, finish the prayer in the way one completes a normal prayer by standing up, then offering the two *sujūd, tashahhud,* and *salām.*

Ṣalātul Āyāt (Shorter Version) Method

1ST RAKʿAH	2ND RAKʿAH
Recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah	Recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah
Recite *Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm* Then (as an example) *Qul huwallāhu Aḥad*	Recite *Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm* Then (as an example) *Qul huwallāhu Aḥad*
Do *takbīr*	Do *qunūt* (this is an optional part of the *ṣalāh)*
Go into the first *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*	Do *takbīr*
Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, then recite *Allāhuṣ Ṣamad*	Go into the sixth *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*
Do *qunūt* (this is an optional part of the *ṣalāh)*	Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, then recite *Allāhuṣ Ṣamad*
Do *takbīr*	Do *takbīr*
Go into the second *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*	Go into the seventh *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*
Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, then recite *Lam yalid*	Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, then recite *Lam yalid*
Do *takbīr*	Do *qunūt* (this is an optional part of the *ṣalāh)*
Go into the third *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*	Do *takbīr*
Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, then recite *Walam yūlad*	Go into the eighth *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*
Do *qunūt* (this is an optional part of the *ṣalāh)*	Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, then recite *Walam yūlad*
Do *takbīr*	Do *takbīr*
Go into the fourth *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*	Go into the ninth *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*
Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, and recite *Walam yakul lahū kufuwan Aḥad*	Stand up straight, do *takbīr*, and recite *Walam yakul lahū kufuwan Aḥad*
Do *takbīr*	Do *qunūt* (this is an optional part of the *ṣalāh)*
Go into the fifth *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*	Go into the tenth *rukūʿ* and recite the necessary *dhikr*
Stand up straight, recite *Samiallāhu li man ḥamidah,* do *takbīr*, perform the two *sujūd*, then stand up for the second *rakʾah*	Stand up straight, recite *Samiallāhu li man ḥamidah,* do *takbīr*, perform the two *sujūd, tashahhud,* and end the *ṣalāh* with *salām*.

ṢALĀTUL MAYYIT

Even though *Ṣalātul Mayyit* is called a *ṣalāh*, it is in fact a type of *duʿāʾ* or supplication for a Muslim who has just passed away. That is why it does not have many of the conditions of a normal *ṣalāh*. It is obligatory for at least one person to perform this prayer for any deceased Muslim who is six [lunar] years or older after they pass away. You may have seen this prayer offered at a masjid or Islamic center.

During this prayer, it is not necessary to be in a state of *wuḍūʾ* or even in *ṭahārah*. However, making an intention *(niyyah)* and facing the *qiblah* are still required.

The dead body of the deceased is placed in front of the people offering the prayer, and those people are facing the *qiblah*. The body should be placed in such a way that the head of the deceased is on the right side of the prayer leader and those who are offering the prayer. In the case if the dead body is that of a male, the *imām* should stand near his waist; and in the case of it being a female, the *imām* should stand near the chest.

Ṣalātul Mayyit has 5 *takbīrs* (including the *Takbīratul Iḥrām*).

- After the 1st *takbīr* (i.e. *Takbīratul Iḥrām),* the *Kalimah ash-Shahādatayn* [testimony to the Oneness of Allah, and testimony to the Prophethood of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ] is recited.
- After the 2nd *takbīr, ṣalawāt [Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammad wa Āl Muḥammad]* is recited.
- After the 3rd *takbīr*, a prayer is offered for all of the believers and Muslims.
- After the 4th *takbīr*, a prayer is offered for the deceased person that you are reciting the *Ṣalātul Mayyit* for.
- Then the 5th *takbīr* is recited, and the prayer comes to end.

It is important to remember that even if this prayer is offered together in congregation, both the *imām* and the followers must recite the supplications (in other words, the followers should not just be silent and listening to the *imām*; rather they also need to be reciting the supplications—either in a whisper or out loud).

Activity 3.1a: Charting Types of Prayer

Fill in the following chart in regards to the prayers discussed above. The first one is completed for you as an example.

NAME OF PRAYER	REASON FOR PRAYER	CONDITIONS OF PRAYER
Five Daily Prayers	Obligatory for each individual to recite these themselves, in order to seek closeness to Allah ﷻ	Need to be in a state of *wuḍū* and *ṭahārah*

DOUBTS IN PRAYER

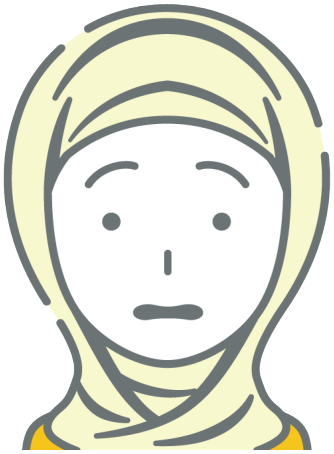
It is important to maintain concentration and attention during our *ṣalāh*. However, for whatever reason, sometimes we may become confused as to whether or not we performed a certain part of the prayer, or exactly where in our prayer we have reached. In this lesson, we will focus on some of the common doubts in *ṣalāh* and see how we are supposed to deal with them. For a list of all the doubts and their rulings, please refer to the book of Islamic Laws of your *marjaʿ*.

The following doubts are divided into three categories:

1. Doubts you should ignore, meaning that if they come to you, you can disregard them and safely continue with your prayers not worrying that they have been invalidated or anything.
2. Doubts that invalidate the prayer, and require you to redo the entire prayer.
3. Doubts that must be addressed in the proper manner, and when done so correctly, do not require you to redo the prayer.

Doubts You Should Ignore

1. A doubt which occurs about an action of the prayer that you already completed. For example, when you are in the position of *rukūʿ*, you doubt whether or not you recited Sūrah al-Ḥamd.
2. A doubt about anything to do with whether the prayer was performed correctly or not, which comes to you after reciting the final *salām* and having completed the prayer. For example, after you finish the *Maghrib* prayer, you doubt whether you performed three or four *rakaʿāt*.



Note: this is in regards to a doubt about whether the prayer was performed correctly or not. If you are not sure whether you performed the actual prayer or not, then you must perform it if you are still within the time of prayer.

3. A doubt about something after the time of that prayer is finished. This can be when you are unsure about whether the prayer you performed was correct or not, or whether you performed that prayer at all. In both cases, the doubt should just be disregarded.
4. The doubts of an excessive doubter. This refers to a person who frequently has doubts about their prayer. Such a person must ignore their doubts. In situations of doubt, one would go with the side of the doubt that makes the prayer correct. For example, if one doubts whether this is their third, or fourth *rakʿah* in the *Maghrib* prayer, then they would assume that it is their third *rakʿah*.

STOP AND REFLECT: How does allowing us to ignore certain doubts about the prayer help us become closer to Allah ﷻ? Would addressing every doubt not be more helpful?

Doubts which Invalidate the Prayer

1. A doubt about the number of *rakaʿāt* that one has performed in the *Ẓuhr*, *ʿAsr*, or *ʿIshāʾ* prayer, if they occur **before** the completion of the two *sujūd* in the second *rakʿah* of the prayer.

Note: When a person has any of these doubts, they should **not** just break their prayer immediately. Rather, they should think for a short period of time and see if they are leaning toward one side more than the other. If they feel one side is more likely, then they should go with that side and complete their prayer as such. But if they are still undecided after a few moments of thought, then their prayer becomes invalid, and they need to redo it.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to learn about how to correct our doubts in prayer? List three reasons.

Doubts which Do Not Invalidate the Prayer

In general, doubts in regards to the number of *rakaʿāt* that occur in *Ẓuhr, ʿAsr,* and *ʿIshāʾ* prayers, **after** one has completed the two *sujūd* in the second *rakʿah* of the prayer, can—and in most cases—must be addressed. There are special ways of addressing this kind of a doubt:

- A person should assume that they have performed the greater number of *rakaʿāt,* so for example, if in the position of standing, one doubts whether this is the third or fourth *rakʿah* of that prayer, they would take it as being the fourth *rakʿah.*
- Immediately after completing this original prayer, a person needs to offer *Ṣalātul Iḥtiyāṭ* (Precautionary Prayer) because it is possible that they may have missed a *rakʿah*. In the example above, the person doubted whether it was their third or fourth *rakʿah,* so the rule is to take it as the greater *rakʿah* (so the fourth) and in this case the individual would then perform one *rakʿah* of *Ṣalātul Iḥtiyāṭ* right away. *Ṣalātul Iḥtiyāṭ* prayer is like a normal *rakʿah* of prayer, except that only Sūrah al-Ḥamd is recited—not the second sūrah—and that too, it is recited silently.

There are many other doubts that can occur which must be rectified properly, so one should refer to the book of Islamic Laws of the relevant *marjaʿ*.

Activity 3.1b: Scenarios

Answer the following questions:

1. Farah is reciting her *Maghrib* prayer. She usually does not doubt in prayer, but today she is not sure if it is her second or third *rakʿah*. What should she do?

2. Zaid often doubts in his prayers—like two to three times a day. He is now praying *Ẓuhr* and is not sure if this is his second or third *rakʿah*. What should he do?

3. Dina is reciting her *ʿAsr* prayer. She usually does not doubt in prayer, but today she is not sure if this is her third or fourth *rakʿah*. What should she do?

4. Ammar just completed his *Fajr* prayer. After saying the *taslīm* and finishing up, he suddenly doubts if he prayed two or three *rakaʿāt*. What should he do?

3.2 Humility in Ṣalāh

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Analyze the importance of *ṣalāh,* and how it is the first action that we will be asked about by Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment.
- Establish the key role of *khuḍūʿ* (physical humility) as a gateway to *khushūʿ* (humility of the heart).
- Interpret key Islamic texts relating to presence of the heart through examination and analysis.

Let us Recall Khuḍūʿ and Khushūʿ

- *Ṣalāh* is one of the main ways of achieving our purpose of getting closer to Allah ﷻ and reaching our perfection. It is a form of communication between us and our Creator, and we should constantly be striving to perfect this communication.
- Allah ﷻ often lists *ṣalāh* as the first practical sign of a believer:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

"Successful indeed are the believers, Who are humble in their prayers…" [1]

- When the Noble Prophet ﷺ began his mission, one of the first things he was commanded to do was to offer *ṣalāh* in the middle of the night. Even though it was not obligatory at that time, the Prophet's companions would join him in praying most of the night in order to attain closeness to Allah ﷻ.

QUR'ĀNIC CONNECTION

Muʾminūn: مُؤْمِنُونَ , believers
- Arabic Root Word: ا م ن, a-m-n
- Root Meaning: to be secure, to be in safety
- Related Words: ءَامَنَ, ʾā-ma-na, believed
- Reference: Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 26

IMPORTANCE OF ṢALĀH IN THE AḤĀDĪTH

The importance of *ṣalāh* is evident in both the Noble Qurʾān and the narrations *(aḥādīth)* of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. The *aḥādīth* emphasize that *ṣalāh* is the most important obligation in Islam.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"There is no action that is better in the eyes of Allah than ṣalāh, therefore, one must not let any worldly thing stop a person from performing the ṣalāh at its prime time. Allah condemns the individual who is negligent of one's ṣalāh [the one who neglects ṣalāh is turning away from Allah's mercy]; and [one should] know that Allah does not accept anything except that which is performed with sincerity."* [2]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verses 1-2
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 83, P. 13.

There is another *ḥadīth* which teaches us that *ṣalāh* is the first action we will be asked about on the Day of Judgment. Before we can benefit from the rewards of any other actions we have performed in our life, we must first pass the station of being asked about our *ṣalāh*.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

> "On the Day of Resurrection, a servant will be called (to account for their deeds). The first thing they will be asked about will be the daily prayers. If a person has brought their prayers in its complete form (then they will be saved). Otherwise, they will be thrown harshly into the Fire." [3]

This *ḥadīth* also emphasizes the importance of *ṣalāh* by telling us about the great rewards of this essential act in Islam. The following *ḥadīth* describes just how many blessings surround us when we are engaged in offering our *ṣalāh*:

The final Messenger ﷺ said: *"When a believing servant stands to pray, Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, looks at them (or gives them His attention) for as long as they continue to pray. They are covered by the Mercy of Allah, from above their heads up to the heavens. The angels will surround them, from their sides up to the heavens. Allah will appoint an angel who stands at their head and says: 'O you who are praying, if you only knew who is looking at you and who you are speaking to, you would never turn away and would remain in this place of yours forever.'"* [4]

Activity 3.2a: Art Connection!

Try to visualize this amazing *ḥadīth*! Allah ﷻ has promised to give YOU His full attention! All for you! Depict the above *ḥadīth* in any artistic form you like. Here are some possibilities: a drawing, a painting, a poem, a collage, graphics, or any other idea you have! Add this to your prayer area to serve as a reminder of this inspiring *ḥadīth*.

3 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 4, P. 29.
4 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 4, P. 32.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ all gave the utmost importance to *ṣalāh*. When the time came to approach *ṣalāh*, there was a noticeable difference in even their facial expressions and body language. They truly understood that this is the most important action in their day and their life in general. When the time for *ṣalāh* would set in, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ would visibly shake, and his color and complexion would completely change. When he was asked why this happened, he would say:

> "The time has come for a trust that Allah offered to the skies, the earth, and the mountains, but they were unable to carry it, and humankind carried it. I do not know if I will be able to do justice when I offer it or not?!" [5]

TIPS FOR ATTAINING KHUḌŪʿ AND KHUSHŪʿ

A person's goal should be to strive to maintain two types of humility in *ṣalāh*:

1. *Khuḍūʿ*: Physical humility, attentiveness, and obedience. This is seen through the various prescribed actions of *ṣalāh* such as *takbīr, rukūʿ,* and *sujūd.* The specific rules and firm nature of *ṣalāh* are meant to train our mind and heart to obey and yield in the presence of Allah ﷻ. This is one of the reasons for the specific movements and rules of *ṣalāh*.
2. *Khushūʿ*: Presence and humility of our heart and mind in front of the Greatness of Allah ﷻ. This is what one should strive for daily in every *ṣalāh*—to allow our hearts and minds to be present with Allah ﷻ during our prayers and beyond.

One of the ways of increasing our *khushūʿ* (presence of the heart) during *ṣalāh* is to practice *khuḍūʿ* (physical humility). Did you know that our mental state is influenced by our physical state? For example, when your room is neat, clean, and organized, you are more likely to feel calmer and at ease. Thus, if we practice physical humility and attentiveness in our *ṣalāh*, then we have a better chance of achieving mental humility and attentiveness. Here are some examples of things that we can do in order to attain more presence of the heart, as mentioned in the *aḥādīth*:

- Pray at a relaxed pace, and do not rush the physical actions of the prayers.
- In particular, perform the *rukūʿ* and *sujūd* at a slow pace, in their correct form with the proper recitations trying to add in some of the extra recommended recitals as well.
    - ▷ One day, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was sitting in the masjid when he saw a man come in and pray very quickly. He was praying so fast that his *sujūd* looked like the pecking of a bird. The Prophet ﷺ commented that such a prayer is not accepted and has no benefit.

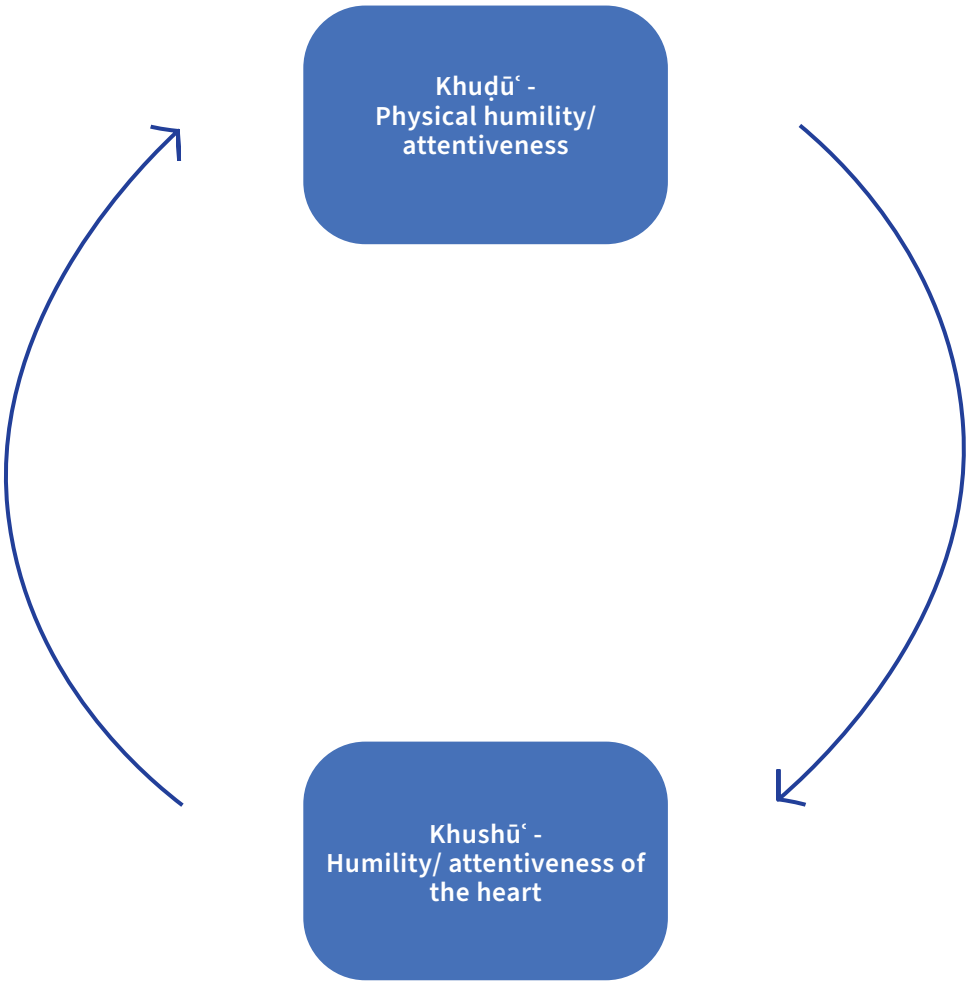
5 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth# 10602.

- Perform all the physical actions of prayer correctly and in their full form, preferably observing the recommendations as well (e.g. standing in the correct way, not fidgeting with our body, raising our hands during *takbīr*, putting our fingers together and our palms on our thighs when in *qiyām,* etc.).
    - ▷ In Sūrah al-Kawthar, Allah ﷻ commands the Prophet ﷺ to perform *'nahr.'* One of the meanings of this is the 'raising of the hands up to the ears during the recitation of *takbīr* in *ṣalāh.'*
    - ▷ One day, the Prophet ﷺ saw a man fidgeting with his beard during *ṣalāh*. He commented that if the man's heart had *khushūʿ*, his body would also be attentive and he would not fidget like this at all.
- When standing in prayer, focus one's gaze on the place of *sujūd,* and do not allow the eyes to wander or look around.

Training ourselves to have *khuḍūʿ* (physical humility) during our *ṣalāh* is one of the ways that we can try to increase our *khushūʿ* (presence of the heart). This is something that we can put into practice by reviewing the rules of prayer, including the various recommendations which are highly encouraged to incorporate in our daily *ṣalāh*.

Watch the below short clip by Āyatullāh Bahjat on The Effects of Praying on Time:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-lLI36ViWI



Short clip by Āyatullāh Bahjat on the effects of praying on time

Activity 3.2b: Guided Reading

Excerpt from Adāb as-Ṣalāt by Āyatullāh Sayyid Ruḥullāh Khomeini

Adāb as-Ṣalāt is a book by Āyatullāh Khomeini that provides a detailed explanation of the strict disciplines and moral secrets of *ṣalāh*. It is a vital resource for us as we embark on our journey to reach perfection.

Read the following excerpt, and complete the guided reading questions below. You may have to read the passage a few times in order to decode and analyze it appropriately.

> *"Thus, we are to inform the heart that the world is the Sacred Presence of Allah, the Exalted. This is because He, the Glorified, is Present at all places and spaces, especially the ṣalāh, which requires special permission for being in His Presence, and is a special time of meeting time of intimacy with Allah, the Exalted. Now, it might be difficult at the beginning to incite the heart to feel the Greatness and the Presence. But gradually, the heart will become familiar with it, and our imagining that we are in the presence of Allah will become a reality.*
>
> *Now, by observing the outward etiquette of how one should be in the presence of the King of the kings and the Sultan of the sultans, the heart will also be affected and will feel His Greatness, and will gradually attain the desired results [from the prayer]. Similarly, love of Allah and His adoration can be incited in the heart by means of learning and practice.*
>
> *So, at the beginning, one should make the heart understand the Mercy and Blessings of Allah, the Exalted, that can be perceived through the senses. Through this, the heart will understand Allah's position as the source of mercy [to all], (special) compassion [for the believers] and [the multitude of His] bounties. The heart will gradually become accustomed to this, and what is perceived in the exterior will affect what is perceived in the interior. The kingdom of the interior will be illuminated by the illuminations of Allah's Beauty, and then the desired results will be achieved."*[6]

1. In the first paragraph, what is ʿAyatullāh Khomeini saying is not so easy to do?

2. In the second paragraph, what is Āyatullāh Khomeini using the term "outer etiquette" to refer to? Would this fall under *khushūʿ* or *khuḍūʿ*?

6 Adapted and edited from *Ādāb as-Ṣalāt* of Āyatullāh Khomeini, Discourse 3, Section 1, Ch. 1.

3. In the last paragraph, what is meant by "what is perceived in the exterior will affect what is perceived in the interior?"

4. What is the main idea of this passage?

CHAPTER 4

Further Furūʿ ad-Dīn

4.1 Ḥajj

4.2 Charity: Khums

4.3 Jihād

4.4 Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

4.1 Ḥajj

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Articulate the greatness of *Ḥajj*.
- Understand and demonstrate the rules and steps of performing *Ḥajj*.
- Outline the spiritual benefits and larger themes surrounding *Ḥajj*.

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Ḥajj is one of the fundamental Islamic practices. Every Muslim who meets the conditions must perform this rite at least once in their lives. The rewards a person receives in this world and the Hereafter are immense as can be seen by the below narration of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ:

> "Perform Ḥajj and ʿUmrah, for they repel poverty, and are an atonement *(kaffārah)* of one's sins, and make Paradise obligatory (for the person who performs them)." [1]

In this lesson, we will learn various rules of *Ḥajj,* as well as some of its spiritual benefits.

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 46, P. 50, Ḥadīth# 99.

Activity 4.1a: Pre-reading Review

Before we begin our lesson, let us review what we already know about *Ḥajj*.

1. Write down a few facts you know about this great act of worship.

2. What comes to mind when you think of *Ḥajj*?

THE GREATNESS OF ḤAJJ

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

"Indeed, the first House [of worship] appointed for humankind was that at Bakkah (Mecca), full of blessings, and guidance for all the worlds. In it are manifest signs (such as) the Station of Abraham (Maqām-e Ibrāhīm); and whosoever enters it [the Ḥaram], will attain security. And Ḥajj to the House is a duty that humankind owes to Allah–those who can afford the journey to it. But whoever disbelieves, then indeed, Allah is free from [any] need of the worlds." [2]

The following narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ further highlight the importance of *Ḥajj*:

1. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, in his final will to his sons Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, said: *"Be God-conscious, and keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's house (Kaʿbah). Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned, then you will not be spared."* [3]

The will of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was not limited to his sons. But in fulfilling his father's will, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ offered 25 pilgrimages **on foot** during his lifetime.[4]

2. ʿAbdullāh Ibn Faḍl al-Hashimī said: *"I said to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq that I have a heavy debt and a big family and cannot make a pilgrimage to Ḥajj. I requested the Imām to teach me a supplication to help me be able to pay off my debts."* The Imām said: *"After every prayer, recite: 'O my Lord! Bless Muḥammad and his pure progeny, and pay for me my worldly debt, as well as my debt in the Hereafter.'"* I asked: *"I know my worldly debts, but what is my Hereafter debt?"* The Imām replied: *"Ḥajj."* [5]
3. The Prophet ﷺ narrated the following about the abundant rewards of the pilgrims: *"They do not pick up their feet to take a step, but a reward will be recorded for them; and they will not put down their feet, but that a sin will be deleted from their record.*[6] *When their devotions come to an end, it will be said to them: 'You have built a construction, now do not demolish it; you are excused regarding your past [misdeeds], so make sure you only do good deeds in your future!'"* [7]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think there is such emphasis on the importance of *Ḥajj* from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

MAJOR THEMES OF ḤAJJ

Ḥajj has various applications to both our physical world, as well as our personal spiritual consciousness. Some of these implementations include:

- ***Ḥajj* is a window to life after death.** *Ḥajj* is often described as a "small resurrection day" because its rituals are meant to remind us of the Day of Judgment.
- ***Ḥajj* is the arrival of a mortal being to an Eternal One.** A servant visits His Sacred and Secure House, and becomes His guest of honor. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"A pilgrim is the guest of Allah: He grants when He is asked, approves once He is called, and compensates a thousand times for every dirham spent."* [8]
- ***Ḥajj* is a spiritual purification.** If it is performed correctly, then it will cleanse the soul of a pilgrim from all types of sins which makes them like a newborn baby. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"The person who completes Ḥajj…will exit from their sins like the day when their mother gave birth to them."* [9] The reward of *Ḥajj* is so abundant that every time the Imāms of Ahlul Bayt ﷺ meant to express the significance of a good deed, they would compare it with *Ḥajj*. There is no reward for a correct *Ḥajj* pilgrimage less than Paradise.
- ***Ḥajj* is a demonstration of sacrifice.** The process of *Ḥajj* requires sacrificing time, money, comfort, and attachments—all for the sake of Allah ﷻ.
- **Unity of Muslims:** During *Ḥajj*, it does not matter where a person is from, what Islamic sect one belongs to, how rich one is, or what color skin one has. Everyone dresses and acts the same way as all of the others, and nothing identifies a person from the sea of millions of Muslims all around. Everyone comes together from all parts of the world and stands united beside one another.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verses 96-97.
3 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 11, P. 23.
4 Naysābūrī, Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn,* Vol. 3, P. 169. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 92, P. 301.
6 Mundhiriy, ʿAbdul ʿAẓīm, *At-Targhīb wa at-Tarḥīb*, Vol. 2, P. 163. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
7 As-Samarqandī, Abu Layth, *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*, P. 489. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
8 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 4, P. 255.
9 *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*, P. 489. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

- **Learning about others:** At certain times during *Ḥajj,* people have the opportunity to talk with others and learn about their background, culture, ideologies, concerns, and needs. The Imāms of Ahlul Bayt ﷺ used this opportunity to deliver sermons to Muslims from all over the world.
- **Humility to Allah ﷻ:** Putting aside worldly affairs and taking upon oneself all the difficulties of *Ḥajj* instills a sense of humility within a person. This includes the hardships of not only long distance travels, but sometimes intense heat, excessive walking, annoyance of flies or other bugs, and being rid of the physical luxuries that people usually have within their own homes. All of these hardships—and many others—are put up with in *Ḥajj* for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and so that He may humble us to become true servants in His obedience, and that we are able to seek nearness to Him.
- **Human equality:** Being amidst a crowd of millions of people who are all dressed similarly without any clear distinction between the rich and the poor should remind us that we are all human beings equal in creation, and that we are nothing in front of Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: Reflecting on the major themes of *Ḥajj*, why is it so important to not be attached with worldly affairs? How can we use this tool that *Ḥajj* teaches us in our daily lives?

THE OBLIGATION OF ḤAJJ

As soon as certain conditions are met, *Ḥajj* becomes obligatory upon a person. These criteria are:

1. *Bulūgh:* one has reached the age of maturity.
2. *ʿĀqil:* one is sane.
3. Performing *Ḥajj* does not make a person neglect a more important obligation.
4. *Istiṭāʿah:* must have the capacity. This implies that a person must have all of the necessary means to perform the pilgrimage. This includes having enough money to go for *Ḥajj* and return back home, as well as possessing the physical ability to make and complete the journey. Part of the conditions of this capacity is that:
   - **a)** A person must be able to meet the living expenses of those whose responsibility is obligatory upon them, such as one's wife and children; and those who—if he were to stop spending on them—it would cause them great hardship (such as one's old and aging parents).
   - **b)** Upon returning, the person must still have a form of income, or some other means of earning one's livelihood, i.e. it must not be such that because of the expenses one incurs in *Ḥajj*, they are compelled to live in difficulty when they come back. This means that if a person knows that they will lose their job if they make the *Ḥajj* journey, and that they will have no other means of income, then they are not considered 'capable of performing *Ḥajj*,' and the obligation is lifted from them at that particular time.
     - ▷ A person has the required funds and physical ability to perform the *Ḥajj* journey, but going on such a journey would mean they miss out on duties like school and university. In such cases, if these duties cannot be rearranged, and the person would face significant difficulty or harm by missing their studies, then they are excused from performing *Ḥajj* that year.
   - **c)** There are no obstructions such as government restrictions, and the person is able to obtain a visa. The route must be open and safe, i.e. there must be no barrier to reaching the *mīqāt* and there is no danger to the pilgrim's life, property, or honor.
   - **d)** According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling, someone who has an outstanding loan (even a long-term loan like a house mortgage) would not be considered as having the capacity that would make *Ḥajj* obligatory (unless the amount they have in savings is more than the outstanding loan they have). If they were to go to *Ḥajj* with their own money, it would not count as their obligatory *Ḥajj*. However, if they were gifted the amount by someone else, then it would count as their obligatory *Ḥajj*. According to Āyatullāh Khamenei's ruling, in such a situation, as long as they are able to make their future loan payments, *Ḥajj* would become obligatory for them.

Activity 4.1b: Obligatory or Not

Using the section above, determine if *Ḥajj* is obligatory on the following individuals or not:

1. An elderly person who has never been able to go, but is now very weak physically.

2. A teenager who has reached the age of *bulūgh,* but cannot afford to go to *Ḥajj.*

3. A person who has the money, is physically able, can take the time off work, and maintain one's livelihood upon their return from *Ḥajj*.

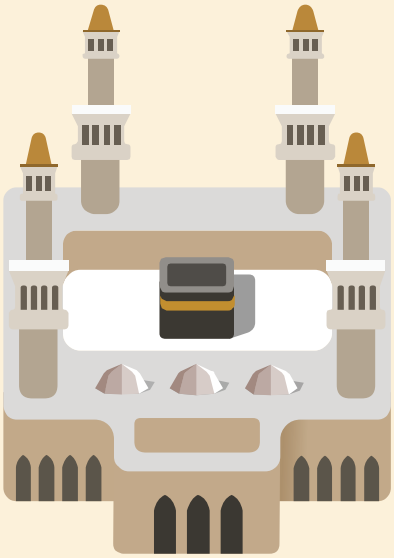
4. A boy or girl who has become *bāligh*, is physically able, and is being given the money for *Ḥajj* by one's parents.

5. An individual who has made all of the preparations, made the intention to go, is physically and financially able, but is not able to obtain a visa.

Why do you think the circumstances that make *Ḥajj* obligatory are lenient, and take into account any hardships that an individual may face—despite its spiritual importance?

THE RITES OF ḤAJJ

As we alluded to above, *Ḥajj* is a "small resurrection day." In the remainder of this lesson, we will look at the rites and rituals of *Ḥajj* with a particular focus on the similarities of these rites with what we will experience on the Day of Resurrection.



1. Preparation for the Journey

Ḥajj is a trip, and like any other trip there is a chance that you may never come back home again. Thus, it is strongly recommended to write down your final will, settle your financial debts, and say farewell to your friends and relatives assuming you may not see them again. If you have slandered your fellow believers or ever spoke ill about them, or in any form or shape have been unfair to them, make sure you rectify this. Additionally, you must repent to Allah ﷻ for all your sins.

Once you intend to go for the pilgrimage to *Ḥajj*, remember the cry of all those who may question you regarding their rights on the Day of Resurrection. Their unique message for you is: Where are you going? Are you going to visit the House of Allah ﷻ, even though you disrespect Him in your own home?! Are you not ashamed to arrive in His presence and that He may address you as an oppressor?

You are traveling toward His House with your **body**, now you should also consider traveling toward the Lord of the House with your **soul** and your **entire being**.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some things you might do (or have done if you have completed *Ḥajj*) to prepare for this journey?

2. Provisions

For every journey, you need certain provisions to cover your needs during the trip. Traveling to *Ḥajj* also requires its own provisions such as enough money for the whole trip, suitable clothes, required medication, etc. Do not take unnecessary items with you or else they will slow you down. Similarly, for the journey to the Hereafter you need valuable provisions which will last forever—that being God-consciousness and piety *(taqwā)*.

3. Transportation

Both the *Ḥajj* trip and the trip to the Hereafter require transportation. The transportation for *Ḥajj* is usually an airplane or a bus on which you voluntarily board. The transportation for the Hereafter is the coffin in which you will be placed and carried out on your family and friends' shoulders. Thus, once you board your airplane, remember the transport to your journey to the Hereafter.

4. Mīqāt (Time and Place of Visit)

Mīqāt is a prescribed location at a fixed time from which the devotions of *Ḥajj* begin. Once you get there, remember the starting point on the Day of Judgment which is also called *'Mīqāt'* where all human beings will be gathered together to be judged. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān: *"Verily, the Day of Distinguishing (Judgment) is the appointed time (Mīqāt) for all of them."* [10]

10 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah ad-Dukhān (44), Verse 40.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think the prescribed location to begin the *Ḥajj* rituals is given the same name as the starting point on the Day of Judgment?

5. Clothes of Iḥrām

Iḥrām is a plain white garment made of two seamless and unsown sheets or towels symbolizing purity and equality.

The clothes of *Iḥrām* should remind us about our clothing in the Hereafter, i.e. our funeral shroud. Notice the similarity between the two: *iḥrām* is plain white, as is the shroud for a deceased. *Iḥrām* has no stitches in it, similar to a shroud. However, one big difference is that a person puts on one's own *iḥrām*, whereas the shroud will be put on by someone else for the demised.

During the devotions of *Ḥajj*, millions of people from different walks of life, irrespective of their color, nationality, social status, and other human-made differences come along with exactly the same dressing: two plain white towels for men, and simple dress for women. Such a huge gathering of human beings dressed in plain white clothing should remind us about the Day of Resurrection when all of the souls will once again join their bodies and rise up in their shrouds proceeding toward the Divine Court of Justice.

6. Talbiyah

Talbiyah is the declaration of *'Labbayk'* which means 'at Your service.' Thus, we need to make sure we are serious in our words. Be hopeful that Allah ﷻ will accept our declaration, but also fearful that He may not due to our own sins and misdeeds.

It is narrated regarding Imām as-Sajjād ؑ that prior to announcing the *talbiyah*, his entire body used to shiver wondering whether Allah ﷻ is going to accept him or not.[11]

This should remind us about another occasion in the Hereafter when people will call upon Allah ﷻ wondering whether their requests are going to be accepted or not.

7. Entering Mecca

When you reach the city of Mecca, remember that you are in the presence of Allah ﷻ, entering His Kingdom, and the most secure place. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And whoever enters it attains security."* [12]

8. Ṭawāf

Ṭawāf means to walk seven times around the *Kaʿbah* in an anti-clockwise direction. According to *aḥādīth*, *ṭawāf* is like *ṣalāh* and *ṣalāh* is the ascension of the believers. When doing the *ṭawāf* around the *Kaʿbah* on the most sacred piece of the earth, ask yourself what your real *Qiblah* in life is, and how you can improve in making Allah ﷻ the center of your actions and decisions.

11 Mizzī, Yūsuf ibn ʿAbdul Raḥmān, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā' al-Rijāl*, Vol. 20, P. 390. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 97.

9. Saʿy

The *saʿy* (or walking with effort) commemorates Lady Hājar's search for water to quench Ismāʿīl's thirst. She ran back and forth seven times between two rocky hill: Ṣafā and Marwah. As you walk between these two hills, remember the sincere efforts and struggles of this great lady; and think about your own struggle in the Hereafter between hope and fear wondering whether you will be forgiven or punished.

10. ʿArafāt

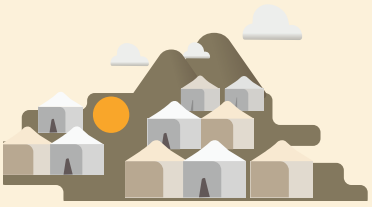
ʿArafāt is a plain desert on the outskirts of Mecca, and this place gets its name from *ʿArafah* which literally means 'to know and gain insight.' Staying here is another duty during *Ḥajj*, and is an opportunity to supplicate to Allah ﷻ and strengthen our knowledge of Him. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"Ḥajj is ʿArafāt"* [13] meaning that the major outcome of *Ḥajj* can be achieved in ʿArafāt. During *Ḥajj*, pilgrims put on their *iḥrām,* then travel from the *mīqāt* to Mecca, and from Mecca to *ʿArafah*. By first visiting the House of Allah ﷻ, the pilgrim acquires strength, then travels from the House of the Lord to the Lord of the House at ʿArafāt.

One of the important supplications to make in ʿArafāt is to pray to Allah ﷻ to bless you with visiting your present Imām عجل الله فرجه. According to Imām al-Bāqir ؑ: *"The completion of Ḥajj is visiting the Imām."* [14]

11. Mashʿar

Mashʿar literally means 'the place and time of coming to one's senses and awareness.' Mashʿar is again a plain desert far away from human civilization where pilgrims spend a whole night for the sake of Allah ﷻ. For many Muslims—particularly those who live in luxury—that night in Mashʿar is the most challenging part of the *Ḥajj* devotions. Imagine you have worn your clothes of *iḥrām*—which is similar to your funeral shroud—are now in the middle of a desert at night. On that night—similar to your grave—your pillow is the rocks of the land, and your mattress is the sand, which is far from the luxury of your bedroom.

Spending one night in the desert—far away from your family and all your worldly attachments—should provide you a great opportunity to find Allah ﷻ, find yourself, and realize your true purpose in life, and wake you up in 'al-Mashʿar' (the place of awakening). Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"Then when you depart from ʿArafāt, remember Allah at the Sacred Mashʿar."* [15]



STOP AND REFLECT: Is there another name that you have heard which is more commonly used for *Mashʿar*?

12. Minā

After spending one night in Mashʿar, the pilgrims become ready to fight Shayṭān. On the following day, as soon as the sun rises, pilgrims depart from Mashʿar and head toward the next station which is the land of *Minā*. According to *aḥādīth*, this placed became known as *"Minā"* or "a place of longing and desire" because it was where

13 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 10, P. 34.
14 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, Vol. 2, P. 262.
15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 198.

Jibrāʾīl ﷺ told Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ: *"Desire what you want from Allah!"* [16] Ibrāhīm ﷺ was so submissive to the Will of Allah ﷻ and was happy with whatever He decided for him. In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ quotes a discussion between Him and this great Prophet of His as follows: *"When his Lord said to him (meaning to Prophet Ibrāhīm): 'Submit,' he replied: 'I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds.'"* [17]

In other words, even though he could have desired whatever he wanted from the Almighty, He was content with what Allah ﷻ Willed for him.

Minā is the place where the battle with self-desire takes place.

a) *Ramy al-Jamarāt* is the first field of this battle. *Ramy* literally means 'shooting or casting,' and *Jamarāt* are 'three pillars' resembling Shayṭān in three different approaches. At *Ramy al-Jamarāt,* the pilgrims cast seven pebbles at the three pillars. In each throw, a person should try to get rid of some of their evil habits.

b) *Qurbānī* is the second of the duties in Minā. *Qurbanī* literally means 'sacrifice.' In Minā, all pilgrims must sacrifice a sheep, goat, cow, or camel. Cutting the throat of an animal symbolizes cutting the throat of selfish desire in order to achieve piety. The Noble Qurʾān describes this step by explaining: *"It is not their meat, nor their blood that reaches Allah, rather, it is your piety that reaches Him."* [18]

13. Ṭawāfun Nisāʾ

Ṭawāf means 'circulating around the Kaʿbah,' and *Nisāʾ* simply means 'women.' This *ṭawāf*—which according to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ is compulsory—resembles an oath from the pilgrim promising loyalty and kindness to one's spouse in the presence of Allah ﷻ at His Holy House in the most Sacred Land.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ and Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ said: *"O my Lord! Grant me the means for pilgrimage to Your House, this year and every year, and let me live in ease and health with abundant sustenance, and do not deny me from visiting those venerable places and honorable sights, and visiting the shrine of your Prophet, may Your peace and mercy be upon him and his pure progeny…"* [19]

16 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 16, P. 355.
17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 131.
18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥajj (22), Verse 37.
19 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Ḥajj and ʿUmrah in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth.* Retrieved May 2, 2023, from: https://lib.eshia.ir/27405/1/227.

Activity 4.1c: Visual Summary

Create some type of visual summary to help you remember the steps of *Ḥajj* mentioned above. Examples of what your visual can be include a poster, a comic strip, an illustration with captions, an example dialogue explaining the steps, etc. Your goal is to capture the essence of each step within this visual using your own words. Be as creative as possible! Use the rubric below to help guide you through each step of the process.

	1 - INEFFECTIVE	2 - SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 - CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE	4 - HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic and most of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic and made it easier to understand. All graphics had a source cited.	All graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet Islamic Principles.	Content met Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose and lack quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF HAJJ - DR ALI SHARIATI

Activity 4.1d: Review Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. In which of the following instances is *Ḥajj not* obligatory upon a Muslim?
   - **a.** Lack of physical ability
   - **b.** Financial debt
   - **c.** Not yet *bāligh*
   - **d.** All of the above

2. How should a person prepare for *Ḥajj*?
   - **a.** Ask for forgiveness from those whom you may have wronged
   - **b.** Settle any debts you have
   - **c.** Donate all your worldly possessions
   - **d.** a & b

3. What is the one difference between one's *Iḥrām* and death shroud *(kafan)*?
   - **a.** One is white
   - **b.** One is unstitched
   - **c.** You wear one yourself, while the other one is put on you

Matching

Match the places/terms on the left with their literal/inspirational meanings on the right.

1. Mashʿar	**a)** to know and gain insight
2. ʿArafah	**b)** place and time of coming to one's senses and awareness
3. Mīqāt	**c)** sacrifice
4. Saʿy	**d)** time and place appointed
5. Qurbanī	**e)** walking with effort

Short Answers:

1. The Prophet ﷺ narrated about the abundant rewards of the pilgrims: *"They do not pick up their foot to take a step, but that a reward will be recorded for them; and will not put down their foot, but that a sin will be deleted from their record. When their devotions come to an end, it will be said to them: 'You have built a construction, now do not demolish it; you are excused regarding your past [misdeeds], so make sure you only do good deeds in your future!'"* What does the underlined portion of the above narration mean?

2. You just returned from *Ḥajj* and your non-Muslim friend comes to ask you about your trip. He then asks you: "Why did you have to go all the way to Mecca to perform *Ḥajj,* why could you not just pray at home?" How would you respond to this?

3. What does the stoning of the Shayṭān represent?

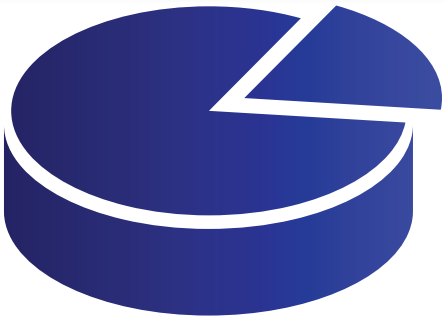
4. Which major theme of *Ḥajj* resonates with you the most? Why?

4.2 Charity: Khums

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define and understand *khums* in Islam.
- Understand the obligation of *khums* and who it applies to.
- Look at some details about how to pay and calculate one's *khums*.



In previous years, we discussed that charity is an essential part of the religion of Islam. We also discussed *khums*, the most important obligatory type of charity. In this lesson, we will briefly review some of the rules on *khums,* and common situations and questions related to this obligatory act in Islam.

Khums literally means 'one-fifth.' It is an obligatory form of charity which has been expressly mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān, and particularly emphasized and further elaborated on by the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

In brief, *khums* involves giving one-fifth (20%) of our savings as charity at the end of the year.

EVIDENCE FOR THE OBLIGATION OF KHUMS

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُم مِّن شَيْءٍ فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنتُمْ آمَنتُم بِاللَّهِ...

"And know that whatever of a thing you acquire (as spoils of war), then indeed, a fifth of it is for Allah, and for the Messenger, and for the near relative, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah..." [1]

Some people argue that in the above verse from Sūrah al-Anfāl, the word *"ghanimtum"* refers only to spoils of war, and not to annual income because the verses before this one are about war time. According to this understanding, *khums* would not be applicable in today's world and would not affect our normal daily income. Instead, specific jurisprudential *zakāh* is the main form of charity that applies today. This is the belief of many of the Ahlus Sunnah.

There are a few important points to note regarding this issue:

1. The term *"ghanimtum"* means that which "you profited" and entails a general meaning. Spoils of war are only one example of profit. For example, in another verse, the Qurʾān uses the same root word in a general sense: *"Yet with Allah there are plenteous gains (مَغَانِم)."* [2]
2. Ahlus Sunnah who deny *khums* on financial profits still believe that paying *khums* applies to gold and silver treasure, and some also say that it applies to whatever is obtained from mines. Wealth gained from treasures and mining is obviously not spoils of war, so through their own Jurisprudence laws, they practically admit that the verse is not exclusive to spoils of war only.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 41.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 94.

3. The context of this verse relates to the Battle of Badr; however, this context was only an example, and does not limit the meaning of the verse to spoils of war. This is because the verse states "whatever of a thing you acquire." The term "whatever" is general and includes any profit, whether the source of it is the booty of war, business, treasures, etc.

For example, in the following verse of the Qurʾān, we read:

"And whatever the Prophet gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, refrain from; and have consciousness of Allah..." [3]

The context of this verse is about a kind of booty that we call *al-fayʾ*. But can we say that obedience to the Prophet ﷺ is only in regards to the spoils of war? Of course not, because the verse is general. In fact, this is the style of the Qurʾān, it sets a general rule through a specific example.

WHAT DOES KHUMS APPLY TO?

According to the scholars, based on guidance from Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, *khums* applies to the following things:

- Any savings that a person has after one's annual living expenses have been met. Once a person has an income, their *khums* date can be set (for example, March 1st). Every year, when that date comes, a person needs to go over all of their finances and calculate how much savings they have for that year. They then need to give 20% of this as *khums*.
  - ▷ For example, Hasnain started working his first job at his uncle's fruit shop in March of 2012. Now it is March 2013, and he saved up $200 this year in his bank account. He needs to calculate 20% of this–which would be $40—and give this as *khums*.
- With regards to material possessions which we purchased, but did not actually use them prior to our *khums* date, then (there is a difference of opinion as per below):
  - ▷ Āyatullāh Sīstānī says:
    - If they are things which are usually kept for succeeding years, then *khums* does not need to be paid on them (e.g. winter and summer clothes).
    - If they are not such things, then as per obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib), khums* should be paid on their value.
  - ▷ Āyatullāh Khamenei:
    - If at the time of purchase, they were things which would be considered suitable for the person's social status, then *khums* is not payable on those items even if they were not used for a whole year.
  - ▷ If I purchased something which does not meet the criteria above for my *marjaʿ* and I did not use it for a whole year, then at the time of my *khums* date, I must calculate its current market value and pay 20% of this as *khums*. If the price has gone down, then it is *mustaḥab* to pay based on the original purchase price.
- With regards to gifts that we receive which are not used during the first year (of receiving them), when a person's *khums* date arrives:
  - ▷ Āyatullāh Sīstānī: *Khums* applies to any wealth with monetary value, and this includes gifts and prizes that one attains. (Therefore, if a person was gifted something and they did not use that gift in the first year of receiving it, then *khums* must be paid on the value of that gift.)
  - ▷ Āyatullāh Khamenei: Gifts and prizes are not liable to *khums* if they are gifted with a sincere intention and compatible with the social status of the receiving party.
- Any invested wealth. For example, if a person invested wealth into a business or property during the year that passed, they need to calculate how much they invested and add this to the amount of savings on which they must pay *khums*. This is if they did not pay *khums* on the initial money that they used for the investment. This is because investments are not part of annual living expenses.
- A number of other forms of wealth which are not relevant for most of us today.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Hashr (59), Verse 7.

Activity 4.2a: Calculate their Khums!

1. Mariam started working part-time in July of 2020 at a marketing firm. She was able to save $2100 in the past year. Calculate the *khums* that she has to pay in July 2021.

2. Jawad is working as a carpenter. He pays his *khums* every year on July 3rd. This year, he managed to save $15,000 after all of his expenses throughout the year. Calculate what amount he has to pay as his *khums*.

3. Hadi got many new winter clothes that he did not use this past year due to a mild winter. How much *khums* does he have to pay on these items?

WHO SHOULD I PAY MY KHUMS TO?

- *Khums* is the right and possession of the Imām of our time ﷺ to use in those ways which will bring the most benefit to Islam. However, during his occultation, it is our obligation to deliver our *khums* to the general representative of the Imām ﷺ, who is our *marjaʿ*.
- If we do not have direct access to our *marjaʿ*, then we need to do some research and find out who has permission from our *marjaʿ* to collect *khums* and utilize it in a specified manner. Usually, this will be one of the trusted and qualified Shaykhs in our Islamic centers or masājid. Therefore, when it is time to pay our *khums*, we should approach such a scholar and ask them for instructions on how we can fulfill our duty of paying *khums*. We can also directly contact the office of our *marjaʿ* via their website or by some other means, and ask for instructions on how and to whom we should deliver our *khums*.

HOW IS KHUMS USED?

Khums is divided into two parts:

1. The first part is called *Sahme Sādāt,* and this is used to help people who are Sayyids–descendants of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Therefore, our *marājiʿ*, upon receiving *khums* will distribute among Sayyids who are:
    - Orphans.
    - Poor.
    - Stranded in a strange land without any means of returning home.
2. The second part is called *Sahme Imām.* It is used for causes that would benefit Islam. This usage is specified by our *marjaʿ* in the way that the Imāms ﷺ would have used *khums*. This includes things such as:
    - Helping other poor and needy believers around the world.
    - Funding and maintenance of Islamic Seminaries which keep the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ alive.
    - Funding the study of *Ḥawzah* students who will graduate to become Islamic scholars and leaders in the future, and benefit the community with their knowledge and experience.
    - Building and maintaining *masājid*, Islamic centers, and Islamic schools all around the world.

Activity 4.2b: Charting

Explain the two different types of *khums*. Give an example for each definition.

TYPE OF KHUMS	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE

KHUMS FAQS

- Can I use my *khums* to help my local masjid or Islamic center?
  - ▷ To do this, you need the permission of your *marjaʿ*. Often, your *marjaʿ* will give you permission to use a part of your *khums* for this. Without the permission of your *marjaʿ*, however, this is not allowed.
- Can I use my *khums* to help a poor person that I know, such as a relative or a member of the community?
  - ▷ If the poor person is a non-Sayyid, then in order to do this, you first need the permission of your *marjaʿ*.
  - ▷ If the poor person is a Sayyid, and you have verified that they do not have enough to meet their annual expenses (definition of a "poor" person), and they do not openly drink alcohol, leave aside their prayers, or commit open sins, then:
    - According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, you can pay the *Sahme Sādāt* to them directly.
    - According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, you are still required to obtain permission from your *marjaʿ*.
- During the past year, I invested some of my savings as capital to start a business. Is *khums* payable on this capital?
  - ▷ Yes, *khums* is payable on this capital.
- When calculating the amount on which I have to pay *khums*, do I include savings accumulated from previous years?
  - ▷ If *kh*ums has been paid on the previous years' savings, then these are excluded from this year's *khums* calculation. [So for example, if last year you paid **khums** on $1,000 that you had saved, and now this year your total savings are $1,500 (but that includes the $800 from last year which you already paid *khums* on—it was $1,000 but you paid $200 *khums*, so $800 of that was left over), then the amount you have to pay *khums* on this year will be $700].
- Is *khums* payable on superannuation, pension, or retirement account savings during the time when a person is working and cannot access these savings?
  - ▷ Since the person has no access to these funds, khums does not need to be paid on that amount. However, once they receive the funds (e.g. when they retire) then it is considered a new income and *khums* must be paid on it:
    - If the funds are from one's own contributions, then they need to pay *khums* immediately upon receiving the payment.
    - If the funds are from a company's contributions, then they need to pay *khums* on the unused amount of the payment after one year has passed.
- If a person has an outstanding debt on a loan for something that they need (for example, on a house) and will remain indebted for several years to come, can this debt be subtracted from the income of that year?
  - ▷ The amount which is used to repay the loan installments for the house can be subtracted from the income for that year.

CALCULATING AND PAYING MY KHUMS

In this part of the lesson, we will use a case study to look at how we can calculate and pay our *khums*.

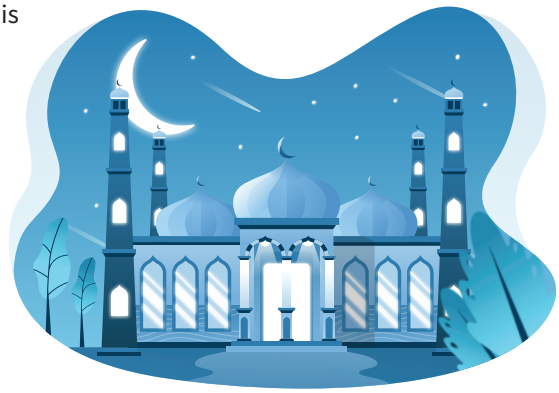
Calculating Khums

Ahmad graduated from university/college and began working as an architect on the 31st of January, 2019. As this was his first job, he decided to calculate his *khums* on this date.[4]

- After finishing his first year of work, on the 31st of January, 2020, Ahmad had no savings left over after meeting his annual expenses.
  - ▷ This means he does not need to pay *khums* for that year.
- After finishing his second year of work on the 31st of January, 2021, Ahmad had saved up $10,000. He did not have any other unused possessions or any investments, and his sole source of income was his job.
  - ▷ Ahmad must calculate 20% of his savings and pay this as *khums*. This comes to $2,000. He is now left with $8,000.
- After finishing his third year of work on the 31st of January, 2022, Ahmad's savings increased to $30,000. He did not have any other unused possessions or any investments, and his sole source of income was his job.
  - ▷ Ahmad has $30,000 of savings. However, he has already paid khums on $10,000 of that last year, and $8000 was left over. Therefore, he is now liable to paying *khums* only for the other $22,000.
  - ▷ He must calculate 20% of this $22,000 and pay it as *khums*. This comes to $4,400.

Paying Khums

Ahmad now wants to pay his *khums*. He makes some inquiries and finds out that there is a local charity that is able to deliver his *khums* to the office of his *marjaʿ,* and can, upon request, give him a receipt from the office of his *marjaʿ* for his *khums* donation. Ahmad decides to pay his *khums* to this charity and receives his receipt a couple of months later. Ahmad also had the option of paying the *khums* to the local scholar in his community who is in contact with the office of his *marjaʿ,* who upon request, is able to obtain a receipt for him for his *khums* donation.



4 For employees who earn a regular pay, the start of their *khums* year is:
- When they start working (according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī).
- When they receive their first paycheck (Āyatullāh Khamenei).

Activity 4.2c: Review Questions

1. What are the different rulings of giving one's *khums* to a Sayyid versus a non-Sayyid?

2. Why is the concept of *khums* so important? (Hint: Who does the money really belong to?)

3. How is *khums* calculated?

4. How do we determine how to get the *khums* to our *marjaʿ*?

5. What evidence can be used to prove that *khums* is not just applicable on spoils of war like some people believe?

4.3 Jihād

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain the definition of *jihād*.
- Understand the importance of *jihād* through the Noble Qurʾān.
- Examine the conditions and rules of *jihād.*
- Differentiate between true *jihād* and false applications of *jihād.*
- Debunk the idea that Islam was spread by the sword.

INTRODUCTION

The Arabic word *jihād* comes from the root *'jahd'* which means 'struggle.' Literally, *jihād* means an intense, prolonged struggle against the enemy. In Islam, *jihād* is of two types: *Jihād al-Asghar* (the Minor Struggle) which refers to struggling against those who have attacked Muslims and their territories; while *Jihād al-Akbar* (the Major Struggle) is used to refer to the struggle against one's own self and the evil desires a person has to deal with.

In this lesson, we will be focusing on the minor form of *jihād—Jihād al-Asghar*, and when we use the term *jihād* in this lesson, this is what we will be referring to.

The importance of *jihād* in Islam cannot be overstated. More than 250 verses were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ related to this issue. The narrations tell us that *jihād* is one of the doors of Paradise which Allah ﷻ opens to His special servants. It is the sixth branch of Islam, and one of the best things after the obligatory prayers. The narrations also tell us that above any goodness is a higher level of goodness, except for being killed for the sake of Allah ﷻ, for there is no goodness higher than this.

But how is *jihād*—which involves fighting against the enemy—compatible with the wider goal of Islam to establish a society of peace and justice through calling people to the servitude of Allah ﷻ? Let us look at 'Islam' as a country, and *'jihād'* its defense ministry. Without a defense ministry, a country would not be able to operate any of its other affairs. Another way to understand *jihād* is to consider Islam as a body, and *jihād* as its immune system.

CATEGORIES OF JIHĀD

The jurisprudential definition of *jihād* is "physical and financial struggle for the sake of Islam." This may be:

- against non-Muslim enemies of Islam
- against Muslim groups who are violating the laws of Islam and fighting other Muslim groups
- against an unjust ruler

The defensive form of military struggle against the enemies of Islam is a substitutive obligation *(wājib al-kifāʾī),*[1] regardless of the presence of a *Maʿṣūm* Imām or not. This is because it is necessary for the preservation of Islam. If a Muslim land is being attacked or invaded, there is an automatic obligation on all able Muslims to defend that territory. The pre-emptive form of *jihād* is not permissible except in the presence of a *Maʿṣūm* Imām, or a specific representative of his, according to the majority of our scholars. As such, pre-emptive *jihād* does not apply during the time of the Major Occultation that we are living in.

1 *Wājib al-kifāʾī* is an action that is obligatory upon everyone to perform, however if a sufficient amount of people fulfill that obligation then it is resolved from everyone else.

Activity 4.3a: Definitions and Examples

Based on the definitions of *jihād*, what are some concrete examples that you can think of for each category?

JIHĀD IN THE QUR'ĀN

There are many misconceptions about *jihād* that circulate in the media, especially in relation to the Qur'ānic teachings on *jihād*. This problem has been exacerbated by the false application and misuse of the idea of *jihād* by a number of terrorist groups who claim to be Muslim, but have very little to do with true Islam, and who are driven by political or economic motivations.

We will briefly discuss some of the Qur'ānic verses related to war and peace. The first point to note is that sometimes Allah ﷻ encourages Muslims to make peace, while at other times prohibits this. This may seem like a paradox; however, there is no contradiction because these are different commands for different situations.

By default, the relationship of Muslims with non-Muslims is one of peace:

- Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān: *"Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes, that you deal with them with kindness and justice. Indeed, Allah loves those who are just."* [2]
- *"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also and trust in Allah; surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."* [3]
- When Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ arrived in Medina, he established peace treaties with different groups. He tolerated the presence of these groups, as well as the hypocrites *(munāfiqīn)*, until they became treacherous and very dangerous.

However, if Muslim lands are being invaded or attacked, or significant harm is being posed to Islam or Muslims, then a pacifist approach is forbidden and the defense of Islam becomes obligatory.

One of the commonly quoted verses regarding military warfare in the Qur'ān is the following verse:

وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۚ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ…

"And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out, and discord [or corruption—(fitnah)] is more severe than killing…" [4]

It is important to understand that this verse and similar verses are:

- Specific to a time of defensive warfare in which Muslims had been attacked and driven out from their homes.
- Specific to a group of the enemies of Islam who had in the past attacked and plotted against Islam and Muslims, and who would otherwise continue to do so.
- Specific to groups who are actively fighting Islam, and who do not have a peace treaty in place with the Muslims.

2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanah (60), Verse 8.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 61.
4 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 191.

In situations like the above, if warfare is necessary, then according to the teaching of Islam, it is to take place with specific rules and regulations. The Qurʾānic verses indicate that:

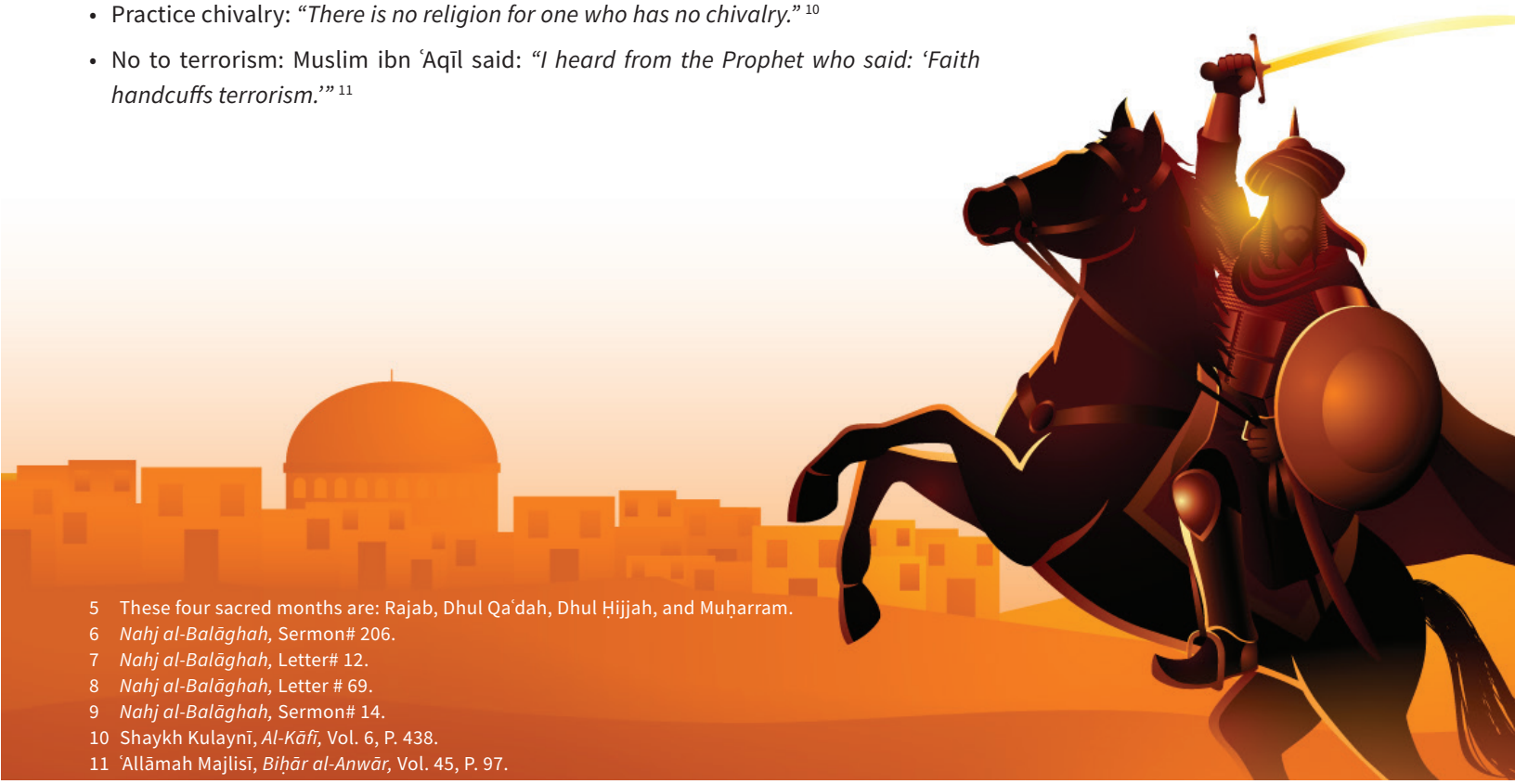
- Peace treaties can be made in certain situations and should be upheld.
- Enemies who surrender are not to be killed.
- There should be periods of truce (and perhaps this is why it is forbidden to fight during the four sacred months[5]).
- 'Civilians' (e.g. women, children, and those who are not engaging in warfare) should not be harmed.

We also know from the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ that even the land should be protected from unnecessary harm. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ would make the following supplication before battle:

"O Allah! Save our blood and their blood, produce reconciliation between us and them, and lead them out of their misguidance so that those who are ignorant of the truth may know it, and those who incline toward rebellion and revolt may turn away from it." [6]

From other narrations, we understand the following about the ethics of *jihād* from the viewpoint of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ:

- Do not initiate a war: *"Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting."* [7]
- Do not take revenge: *"Kill your anger, and forgive when you have power."* [8]
- Do not kill: *"If, by the will of Allah, the enemy is defeated, then do not finish off the wounded and the captives of war, do not inflict pain on women, children, or old men…"* [9]
- Practice chivalry: *"There is no religion for one who has no chivalry."* [10]
- No to terrorism: Muslim ibn ʿAqīl said: *"I heard from the Prophet who said: 'Faith handcuffs terrorism.'"* [11]



5 These four sacred months are: Rajab, Dhul Qaʿdah, Dhul Ḥijjah, and Muḥarram.
6 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon# 206.
7 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Letter# 12.
8 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Letter # 69.
9 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon# 14.
10 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 6, P. 438.
11 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 45, P. 97.

Activity 4.3b: Healthy Debates

Your friend brought up the concept of *jihād* with you. He believes that *jihād* is not only mandatory in religion, but that it is used for war and only against non-Muslims. He says that "we should fight the disbelievers" and quotes some common misconceptions found in media outlets. How would you discuss the concept of *jihād* with him? Is his point of view correct? Do you agree with any of his points? How would you counter his reasoning?

CERTAIN CONDITIONS OF JIHĀD

Jihād is a substitutive obligation *(wājib al-kifā'ī)*, meaning that although it is initially obligatory on everyone, once the need is met by a sufficient number of people, then the obligation is removed from the rest of the people.

It is obligatory upon those who fulfill the following criteria:

- Having reached the age of religious responsibility *(taklīf).*
- Male.
- Sane.
- Ability.

Therefore, it is not obligatory upon women, children, or those who are unable to fight due to physical disabilities.

However, if a Muslim land is being attacked (defensive struggle), then the obligation falls upon absolutely everyone who is able to resist the enemy in any way possible.

If two Muslim groups are fighting, then the first step is to try to bring about agreement between them. If this does not work, then the party who is being unjust and violating the laws of Islam must be fought until it submits to the commands of Allah ﷻ.

THE RULES OF JIHĀD

The foremost rule of *jihād* in Islam is that it should be with the intention of 'for the sake of Allah,' and hence it is often referred to as a type of "holy war." This condition means that:

- Any conflict for worldly issues or personal gains is not *jihād*.
- The one engaging in *jihād* must follow moral and ethical rules because they are fighting for the sake of Allah ﷻ .

Initiating *jihād* is not permissible in the four sacred *(Ḥarām)* months mentioned above.

Just as *jihād* is obligatory in relation to one's self, it is also obligatory on one's wealth as well. Thus, if a person has the ability to resist the enemy of Islam with both one's physical self, as well as one's wealth, then both types of these struggles are obligatory. If a person is only able to do one of the two, then that one becomes obligatory.

It is not permissible to flee from warfare unless it is a strategic withdrawal.

It is recommended to patrol the borders of Muslim lands. If those Muslim lands are being threatened by the enemies, then this becomes an obligation.

One other general rule is the following: If a person fears that they are not able to practice the obligations of Islam in the land in which they live, then it is obligatory upon them to migrate from that land, if they have the ability to do so.

STOP AND REFLECT: How do the strict rules of *jihād* ensure that this concept is not misused?

FALSE APPLICATIONS OF JIHĀD

Many groups or individuals claim to be practicing *jihād* when in fact they are committing murder and grossly violating the laws of Allah ﷻ. These include:

- Those who accuse other Muslim groups of being disbelievers, and carry out bombings, shootings, or other attacks on these Muslims and their places of worship.
- Those who carry out suicide bombings or other attacks on random individuals throughout the world.

The founders and leaders of these groups described above generally do not have any Islamic guidelines or motivations. Instead, they have political or economic tendencies, and often have the backing of governments who are the enemies of true Islam. Individuals who are ignorantly influenced by these groups are going down a misguided and dangerous path.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is the path of these individuals or groups so dangerous? Support your response with a *ḥadīth* or *āyah* of the Qurʾān.

ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS CO-EXISTENCE AND SOCIAL HARMONY

Having discussed the rules of *jihād* in Islam and the importance of defending Muslim lands, it is also important to discuss some of the misconceptions related to Islam in relation to the issue of *jihād*.

Does Islam Believe in Religious Co-Existence and Social Harmony?

Islam definitely teaches religious co-existence and social harmony; and in order to establish a peaceful religious co-existence in society, Islam has suggested four principles:

1. No Compulsion in Religion

No doubt, there are different factors involved in forming people's opinions and faiths. The physical structure, organic compounds, time, place, diet, education and so many other factors have inevitable effects on people's faiths. Thus, the healthy way to change their opinion is to encounter them from their origins. Utilizing force and compulsion not only cannot change the hearts of people, but it may in many instances increase hatred and animosity.

To this end, the Noble Qurʾān clearly denounces the use of the force in terms of religion. It is ultimately the right of people to choose any religion they are happy with, and the duty of the Prophets ﷺ was not more than educating people and reminding them about the right path. They never allowed people to force others to the truth. The following verses are just a few examples of many:

a) *"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] religion; the truth stands clear from error."* [12]

b) *"And had your Lord willed, all those who are on earth would have believed. Will you then compel humankind against their will to believe?!"* [13]

c) *"And say: 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills—let them believe; and whoever wills—let them disbelieve.'"*[14]

2. Logical Debate and Discussion

Islam, while respecting other religions and beliefs, may disagree with some of their teachings. It invites their adherents to open discussion and debate in a peaceful and logical manner far from any type of fanaticism and prejudice.

The following verse is an example of this approach:

a) *"Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious."* [15]

3. Divine Religions, Grades of One School

Therefore, despite the followers of other religions who consider themselves the chosen nation and the only saved ones, Islam considers all of the Divine religions as different grades of one school. From the Islamic point of view, each new Divine religion was an upgraded version of the previous one prescribed to complete its teachings, and Islam was the final, perfect religion.

a) *"Indeed, those who believe (in Islam), and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabians [before the final Prophet] - those (among them) who believed in Allah and the Last Day, and did righteousness - shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."*[16]

4. The Principle of Righteousness and Justice

In regard to being righteous and just with other people of all religions, Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"Allah does not forbid you, with regard to those who fight you not for your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them. Indeed, Allah loves those who are just." [17]

WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD OR VIOLENCE?

A common misconception among non-Muslims is that Islam was spread through violence and war.

In replying to this misconception, we must bear in mind that in Islam: *"There is no compulsion in religion."* [18] Thus, no one can be "forced" to become a Muslim.

It is true that Muslim rulers conquered the Persian Empire, Egypt, Spain, and many other places. Their ambition was—like many other kings—to expand their territories and conquer new lands. There is no historical record that the people of those countries were forced to accept Islam. Hence, many churches and synagogues existed even after about 1,400 years of Muslim rulers in Iran, Egypt, and many other Muslim countries. Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion in pre-Islamic Iran, is still practiced in the contemporary Islamic Republic of Iran up until today; it is recognized, and its adherents constitute one of the religious minorities there. Similar to the Christians and the Jewish people, they have a representative in the Iranian Parliament.

Sir Henry M. Elliot in his *History of India* states:

> *In 712 AD, the Arab leader, Muhammad bin Qasim, conquered Sind and set up Muslim rule; the earliest converts were mostly Hindus of low cast who left Hinduism believing that the Muslim faith offered them equality. When Muhammad bin Qasim wrote to his uncle requesting guidance regarding the natives of Sind, this was the reply he received: "It appears that the chief inhabitants of Brahmanabad had petitioned to be allowed to repair the temple of Budh and pursue their religion. As they have made submission and agreed to pay taxes to the Caliph, nothing more can be properly required from them. They have been taken under our protection, and we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given to them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following their own religion."*[19]

12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 256.
13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 99.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 29.
15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Naḥl (16), Verse 125.
16 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 62.
17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanah (60), Verse 8.
18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 256.
19 Elliot, Sir Henry M., *History of India,* Vol.1, P. 185.

It was due to this Islamic tolerance that the Orthodox Christians of Byzantium openly expressed their preference for the Ottoman turban in Istanbul to the hats of the Catholic cardinals. Elisee Reclus, a French traveler during the 19th Century, wrote that the Muslim Turks allowed all the followers of different religions to perform their religious duties and rituals, and the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Sultan were more free to live their own lives than the Christians who lived in the lands under the rule of any rival Christian sect.[20]

A sword may penetrate through the flesh of people, but it cannot change their hearts. Ancient Iran was conquered by Alexander the Great, about a millennium prior to the conquest of Muslim Arabs. Yet, the influence of the Roman civilization on Iran was rather temporary and shallow.

During the post-Islamic era, Iran was twice conquered by the non-Muslims; the Suljuk in the 11th century, and the Mongols in the 13th century. In each case, amazingly, the conquerors adopted the religion (Islam) of the conquered! This is certainly a unique occurrence in history. Since they were the victors, they certainly could not have been forced to become Muslims.

Ironically, it is more evident that violence has often been employed by non-Muslims to stop the spread of Islam, rather than by Muslims to spread it. The forced conversion of the Muslims in Spain in the early 16th century is just one such example.

STOP AND REFLECT: Many of the examples cited above are from older times. Do you think stories like this exist today? Why or why not? If they do exist, why are they not featured prominently in mainstream media?

20 Reclus, E., *Islam. In Nouvelle Géographie Universelle,* Vol. 9, La Terre et Les Hommes; L'Asie Antérieure Lors.

Activity 4.3c: Research

1. Read the two articles below, and write a brief response (two paragraphs) to those who claim that Islam was spread through violence and forced upon people.
    - https://www.al-islam.org/articles/spread-islam-its-beginning-14th-century-mansour-leghaei
    - https://www.al-islam.org/articles/was-muhammad-s-prophet-terror-mansour-leghaei
2. Research one of the historical incidents mentioned above regarding the spread of Islam to non-Muslim lands, and present your research in the form of an informational poster or presentation.

Use the area below for planning:

1. THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

2. WAS MUHAMMAD (S) A PROPHET OF TERROR?!

Grading Rubric

	1 - INEFFECTIVE	2 - SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 - CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE	4 - HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most graphics were related to the topic, and most of them had a source cited.	Most graphics were related to the topic, and made it easy to understand. All graphics had a source cited.	All graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet Islamic Principles.	Content met Islamic Principles, however, there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose and lacked quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrate quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

Activity 4.3d: Review Questions

1. What are the conditions of *jihād*? List them.

2. What are the two main types of *jihād*? What is the bigger *jihād,* and how can we fulfill it in our everyday lives?

3. Is there compulsion in religion? What does this mean, and how can we use the verse regarding compulsion in religion to respond to the idea that Islam was spread by the sword?

4. List some of the false applications of *jihād*. How can these applications be dangerous?

5. Name three examples from history that show that Muslims did not forcibly convert people to Islam.

4.4 Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain and understand the concept of *amr bil maʾrūf* and *nahy ʿanil munkar;* and the conditions of them.
- Be able to extend the lesson to a social and global scale.
- Understand our duties as Muslims in a political context of enjoining good and forbidding evil.
- Understand how to maintain *amr bil maʾrūf* and *nahy ʿanil munkar* in education.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil are two of the most important obligations in Islam. In Arabic, these two obligations are termed:

Amr bil maʾrūf	Enjoining good
Nahy ʿanil munkar	Forbidding evil

In this lesson, we will discuss the importance of these obligations, and some ways of carrying out the responsibilities related to them.

Enjoining good means that 'we should encourage and urge others to do righteous deeds.' The spirit behind this obligation means that we should also create a social environment where people are encouraged to adhere to the laws of Islam and do good deeds. Some examples include:

- A parent teaching and showing their child how to pray appropriately.
- A school curriculum that includes religious education which teaches children the rules of Islam.
- Giving encouragement and positive motivation for good deeds.
- Presenting the Prophets ﷺ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ as the true role models.

Forbidding evil means that 'we should discourage and prohibit others from doing evil deeds.' The spirit behind this obligation includes creating a social environment where people are discouraged from transgressing against the laws of Islam or doing evil deeds. Some examples include:

- Regular reminders about the importance of adhering to Islamic obligations.
- Explaining how people who are considered celebrities, popular, or famous are not necessarily admirable from the perspective of their practices and morals.
- Defining and enforcing the boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in terms of entertainment media, friendships, and social gatherings.

WĀJIB KIFĀʾĪ:
An obligation stands as long as it is not met. Once someone meets the obligation, then it no longer applies to anyone.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil are collective obligations *(wājib al-kifāʾī).* This means that the responsibility stands on everyone as long as it is not met. However, once someone meets the obligation, then it no longer applies to anyone. For example, if a Muslim is using foul language in public in a sinful way, then it becomes an obligation upon all of those who hear him to discourage/prohibit him (assuming the conditions for it being obligatory are in place). However, once one person discourages/prohibits them, then the obligation drops from the others.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE OBLIGATIONS

It is unanimously accepted among Muslims that these are two very important obligations. The Noble Qurʾān makes this clear in many instances, such as the following:

> "You are the best community amongst people, you enjoin good and forbid evil, and believe in Allah…" [1]

"O my son! Establish prayer, enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and be patient over whatever befalls you. Indeed, these are some of the important commandments (ordered by Allah) with no exemption." [2]

As can be seen from the above verses of the Noble Qurʾān:

- Among the characteristics of the best community is that they enjoin good and forbid evil.
- The command to enjoin good comes directly after the command for the daily prayers—emphasizing its importance.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

"People will be in a good state as long as they enjoin good and forbid evil, and help one another to goodness. If they do not do this, then blessings will be taken away from them and they will be empowered over each other. Then there will be no helper for them–neither in the earth, nor in the skies." [3]

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said:

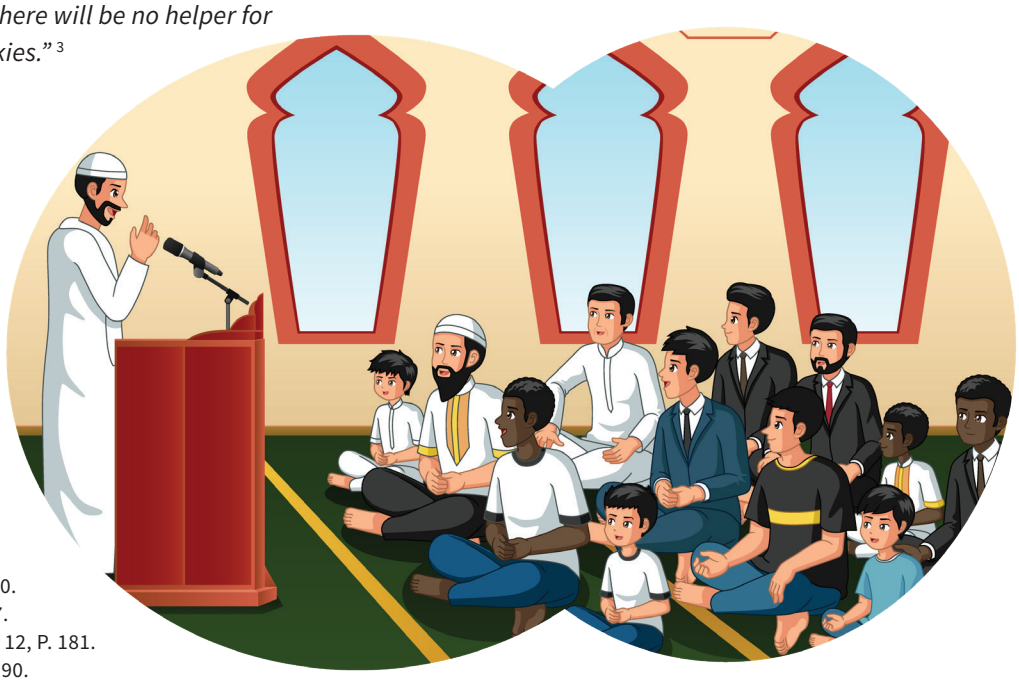
"You should enjoin good and forbid evil. Otherwise, the evil people among you will come to power. At such a time, the good people among you will supplicate, but their prayers will not be answered." [4]

The narrations emphasize that if a community wants to continue to receive blessings from Allah ﷻ, and to have their prayers answered, then they cannot ignore these two vital obligations. If a community ignores these obligations, or becomes lazy in fulfilling them, then they risk:

- Losing many of their blessings.
- Being excluded from Allah's mercy.
- Being ruled by ruthless oppressors.
- Never having their prayers answered.

Thus it is clear from the Noble Qurʾān and the authentic narrations that these two obligations are extremely important on an individual and community level.

STOP AND REFLECT: Name two realistic consequences that could potentially happen to an individual, and on a society level, if the obligation of *amr bil maʾrūf* and *nahy ʿanil munkar* are not met.



1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl-Imrān (3), Verse 110.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 17.
3 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 12, P. 181.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 97, P. 90.

CONDITIONS FOR THESE COMMANDMENTS

Masʿadah ibn Ṣadaqah narrates: *"Imām as-Ṣādiq was asked about enjoining good and forbidding evil–are they an obligation upon the entire community? He replied: 'No.' Then it was questioned: 'Why not?' He said: 'It is an obligation for the one who has the ability, for one who is obeyed, and for the one who knows what is good and what is evil.'"* [5]

The following are the main conditions for enjoining good and forbidding evil:

- **Sufficient knowledge:** The person who wants to engage in this must know what is good and what is evil, and have sufficient knowledge regarding these.
- **Probability of affecting the person being advised:** If we feel that our advice will have an effect on the person, then we are obligated to say or do something. If we feel that it will not have any effect, or might even make things worse, then we do not need to do or say anything. However, according to some *marājiʿ*, such as Āyatullāh Sīstānī, the obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāt wājib)* in this situation is that we should express in some way possible our disapproval and displeasure with the wrongdoer's improper actions (for example, by frowning, or showing a look of displeasure), even if we know that it will not have any effect on them. If there is a Muslim who does not offer their prayers, and no matter what I tell them they never listen, then I do not need to mention anything else to them, but I would still have to demonstrate some displeasure when I see them neglecting their prayers.

- **Probability that the person will make the mistake again:** If a person is not really likely to make that same mistake again, then we do not need to advise them (this is because it was like a one time thing that perhaps they slipped in, but have realized and most probably will not commit that sin again).
- **The person performing the obligation should not fear being harmed:** If a person feels that their own life, or the life of other Muslims, or their health, honor, or wealth could be significantly harmed if they advise someone about an issue, then the obligation no longer applies to that person. However, if it is a very important issue, then one must take a stand even if there is a fear of harm. For example, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ knew that he would be killed if he stood up against Yazīd in Karbalāʾ, but there was a much more crucial issue at hand, thus he spoke up and tried to guide the people even though it cost him, his family, and his companions their lives.

5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 97, P. 93.

Activity 4.4a: Charting

Fill in the following chart using the above information on the main conditions of *amr bil maʾrūf* and *nahy ʿanil munkar*.

CONDITION	DEFINITION	REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

Why do you think certain conditions have been placed on how/when to enjoin good and forbid evil?

ETIQUETTES OF GIVING ADVICE

If the above conditions are met, then it becomes obligatory on a person to enjoin good or forbid evil. This will often be done through giving advice to someone. When giving advice, there are certain etiquettes that one must follow:

- Maintain a pure intention. A person must make sure that they are not just picking on people's mistakes or trying to put them down, rather they are truly trying to help and guide the other individual.
- Give advice politely and respectfully.
- Share the advice privately, not in front of other people (whenever possible).

Other possible ways of enjoining good and forbidding evil may include:

- Expressing internal unhappiness when one sees forbidden things being committed, or obligatory actions being neglected—by showing displeasure on one's face or turning away from that person.
- Reminding the person about the rewards that awaits them for doing good and staying away from evil, the punishments for those who commit sins knowingly, the promise of forgiveness that Allah ﷻ gives to those who repent, and the extra love that the Almighty promises to those who practice patience, self-restraint, and self-control.
- Cutting off relations with the person temporarily, or making them aware that one is not happy with what they are doing through the way one interacts with them.

STOP AND REFLECT:

1. Why is it important to give advice privately and politely? What effect do you think this has on the person receiving advice?

2. Do you think that it would be better to give advice through talking, or by showing displeasure on one's face? Does it depend on the situation? Why or why not?

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

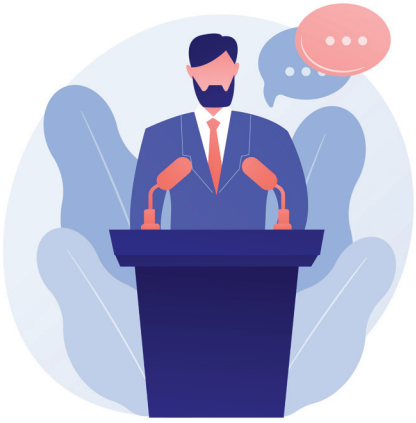
Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"When the following verse was revealed: 'O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from the Hellfire…' a man from among the Muslims sat up and began to cry. He said: 'I have been unable to protect myself, and now I have been made responsible over my family as well?' The Messenger of Allah told him: 'It is sufficient for you to command them to that which you command yourself, and forbid them from that which you forbid yourself.'"* [6]

6 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 16, P. 147.

There are certain special situations where enjoining good and forbidding evil are even more important, some of these include:

- **Within a family:** Parents especially have a specific obligation to advise their children and guide them. This obligation also applies to siblings advising one another.

- **Positions of leadership:** People in positions of leadership (for example, community leaders, government heads, etc.) have a particular obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil. This is especially important in maintaining the community's moral health.



SCENARIOS RELATED TO ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

- Does *amr bil maʾrūf /nahy ʿanil munkar* apply to when a younger person sees an elder person (like a parent) leaving aside something obligatory *(wājib)* or doing something forbidden *(ḥarām)*?

  ▷ Yes it does, but with parents in particular, the way it is done should be with utmost respect and good behavior, and should not in any way be considered a form of disrespect.

- In general, if someone knows a rule but is making a mistake in applying it, then we do not need to tell them. If however someone does not know a rule, then we need to tell them about that. Let us look at a few scenarios to better understand this:

  ▷ Someone knows that eating lard is forbidden *(ḥarām),* however they do not know that the dessert they are eating right now has lard in it.

  - In this case, there is no obligation to tell them (and their act will not be considered a sin).

  ▷ Someone does not know that eating lard is forbidden *(ḥarām),* and you see them eating things with lard in it all the time.

  - In this case, they do not know about a law that they should know about; so you have to tell them about this, and then perform *nahy ʿanil munkar* if they continue to eat it.

  ▷ Someone regularly mispronounces words in their *ṣalāh* in such a way that makes it void.

  - In this case, you have to inform them about this.

  ▷ A strand of a woman's hair mistakenly comes out of her scarf while she is reciting her *ṣalāh* and she is not aware of it; she knows the law, but is just not aware of this situation at the moment that her hair is showing.

  - In this case, you do not have to tell her (and it would not be considered an act that invalidates the prayer).

  ▷ A lady's hair is always showing from her scarf during *ṣalāh*.

  - In this case, if you are somewhat confident that it comes from her either: (a) not knowing the law about having to properly cover up in one's *ṣalāh,* or (b) she does not care about the law and does it deliberately, in both scenarios you have to tell her (as long as the above-mentioned conditions are in place).

Activity 4.4b: Scenarios

For each of the following scenarios, explain what the correct response would be on how to deal with the situation.

1. Amy is a new revert and is unaware that meat has to be *ḥalāl* in order to consume it. She regularly eats meat from a restaurant that is not *ḥalāl*.

2. During the month of Ramaḍān, you see Ahmed drinking water. You know that he is usually fasting and not sick at this time. He might have forgotten for a moment and drank some water.

3. Zaynab decided to eat chocolate cake from the school cafeteria. She is unaware that it contains lard. You know it does because you asked the school chef a week prior if it contained any animal products.

4. Muhammed stopped offering his prayers. He justifies his neglect of prayers by saying that he has some unresolved doubts in his faith. This has been ongoing for a few months now. You and your friends have already expressed your concern and told him that he should be praying. Again, at *ʿAṣr* time, he refuses to pray with you.

ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL ON A SOCIAL AND GLOBAL SCALE

Until now, this lesson has focused on the duties of enjoining good and forbidding evil in our interactions with individuals around us. These duties also apply to the areas of media and advertising, as well as politics and education.

Media and Advertising

Advertising is a major tool for enjoining good and forbidding evil—or it can be the exact opposite! The general public responds to mass advertising, and through this medium people can easily be influenced. Unfortunately, in most countries around the world, advertising is used to encourage sins and evil deeds, rather than to enjoin good. We see advertisements for alcohol everywhere, and it was only recently that some countries stopped cigarette advertising.

Just as damaging are the indirect messages sent through advertising. Western advertising often relies on indecent depictions of the human body because they believe that such depictions will drive higher profits. Therefore, we see that whatever is being advertised (whether it be cars, alcohol, clothing, perfumes, etc.) there is very often a sexual tone to that advertising. This creates a society which is obsessed with body image and indecency. Rather than enjoining good, advertising in many Western countries and beyond, constantly and persistently spreads evil.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think of a current advertisement that you have seen. It can be an ordinary advertisement for any product or service. What was the advertisement for? What was the underlying tone?

Our duty in relation to this could include the following:

- Protect and shield ourselves, our families/loved ones, and community from such advertising. We can do this by controlling and minimizing the usage of popular media whether it be through television or the internet. Even if there is a suitable TV program we want to watch, then we can watch it on our own terms through the use of ad blockers or safe channels free from inappropriate advertising.
- Positive advertising: Formal advertising tends to be expensive, but we can use our social media platforms and other avenues to advertise for positive things.

Activity 4.4c: Advertisements

Thinking about our duties in relation to advertising, in what way can you change the advertisement you reflected on above to better suit Islamic principles? Pick an advertisement and redo it following the guidelines to advertise the product in a more appropriate manner. You can present your advertisement in one of the following ways:

- Billboard/Poster
- TV Commercial: Live/Pre-Recorded (Script to be turned in)
- Radio Commercial: Live/Pre-Recorded (Script to be turned in)

Use the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 - INEFFECTIVE	2 - SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 - CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE	4 - HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic.	Most graphics were related to the topic and made it easier to understand.	All graphics were directly related to the topic.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met Islamic Principles, however, there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Advertisement was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Advertisement was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Advertisement was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Advertisement was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The advertisement was not at all convincing or compelling.	The advertisement was somewhat convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function too well as an advertisement.	The advertisement was extremely compelling and convincing.

Politics

Another major issue related to enjoining good and forbidding evil is what happens globally in the sphere of politics. In recent times, it has become common for countries to invade other countries using different and usually unjustified pretexts. These invasions lead to death and destruction, and cripple the invaded countries for a long time. In addition, we see non-Muslim powers trying to cause division between Muslims and fester conflict between them.

Politics also affect our communities at a local level in Western countries. For example, changes to data security laws, 'terrorism' laws, and discrimination laws may unfairly target or affect Muslims.

Our duties in relation to this may include:

- Following the news and being aware of what is happening around the world.
- Lobbying our local and national governments by sending letters to politicians, attending peaceful protests, and making the issues known to our communities.
- Supporting or participating in social media and mainstream media campaigns which work to denounce oppression. An example is the BDS campaign that is a Palestinian[7]-led movement promoting boycotts[8], divestments[9], and economic sanctions[10] against Israel[11]. Another example is the 'Islamophobia Register Australia' that aims to highlight instances of discrimination against Muslims in Australia.

Education

It is difficult for people to follow the truth if they do not know it. Therefore, education is an essential part of enjoining good. This could include:

- **Community education on Islam:** Setting up full-time and weekend Islamic schools for children, and after-hour classes for adults is a great way of bringing the community together while teaching important Islamic values and beliefs. Other methods of education include online forums for distance learning and media production.
- **Individual education of the wider community:** This is done simply by talking about contemporary issues with our non-Muslim coworkers, colleagues, friends, sports teammates, etc. This can have a great impact on the way they view Islam and Muslims.
- **Mass education of the wider community:** Campaigns, publications, and media production that promote Islamic heritage, values, heroes, and significant issues facing Muslims are part of educating the society about Islam. These could include exhibitions relating to the Qurʾān; events that raise awareness about global flashpoints; campaigns that educate others about Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and other members of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, in particular, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ—including Karbalāʾ and the Event of *Arbaʿīn*; charity efforts that impact the larger community; and donating useful books about Islam to local libraries.

7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinians
8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boycotts_of_Israel
9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divestments
10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_sanctions
11 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel

Activity 4.4d: Case Study

Research a social media or mass media campaign that has had a positive impact.

1. What elements do you think made it successful?

2. Were there any negative aspects to this campaign?

Now it is your turn! Complete a proposal worksheet for one of your ideas keeping in mind the aspects that you analyzed above.

New Campaign Proposal Idea

1. Campaign Name:

2. What big idea or question will this address? (Purpose)

3. Why do you think there is a need for this particular campaign?

4. How do you picture this campaign coming to life?

5. What will be the overall outcome of this campaign?

CHAPTER 5

Practical Fiqh

5.1 Transaction Laws

5.1 Transaction Laws

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand Islamic work ethics.
- Understand and explain types of business that are *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl.*
- Explain transactions that are forbidden in Islam.
- Define cheating in Islam.
- Go over the rules related to certain types of careers.

Islam is a religion that covers all aspects of life. A significant part of all our lives involve business transactions. As a society, we work, buy, sell, and rent/hire things. Islam has set out rules for all these transactions. These rules are in place firstly to protect us from the harmful effects of some things; and secondly, to maintain justice between people and stop exploitation.

ISLAM URGES US TO WORK!

Islam encourages everyone to seek from Allah's bounties: *"...disperse through the land and seek from the bounty of Allah..."*[1] Being idle in life is highly discouraged, while being occupied and busy is very much encouraged. "Being occupied" can take on different forms—depending on one's personal situation. For some, this may involve learning and acquiring skills. For others, it may involve nurturing young children at home, or taking care of dependent relatives. For others, it may involve running a business or working for a business. Generally speaking, we are encouraged to establish ourselves in a financial sense, and keep a balance between the spiritual and material life. The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have told us:

> "Those who sell their Hereafter for this world are not from us, and those who sell their world for their Hereafter are also not from us." [2]

This point is also indicated by Allah ﷻ in the Noble Qurʾān, where the following people are praised: *"(There are) Men whom neither trade, nor sale diverts them from the remembrance of Allah."* [3]

Here, the Noble Qurʾān implicitly praises those who do business and are able to take care of their prayers and remember Allah ﷻ in whatever they do. In fact, Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ says that: *"Such people have more reward for praying on time than those who have no business and are unemployed, and thus do not find it difficult to attend the prayers."* [4]

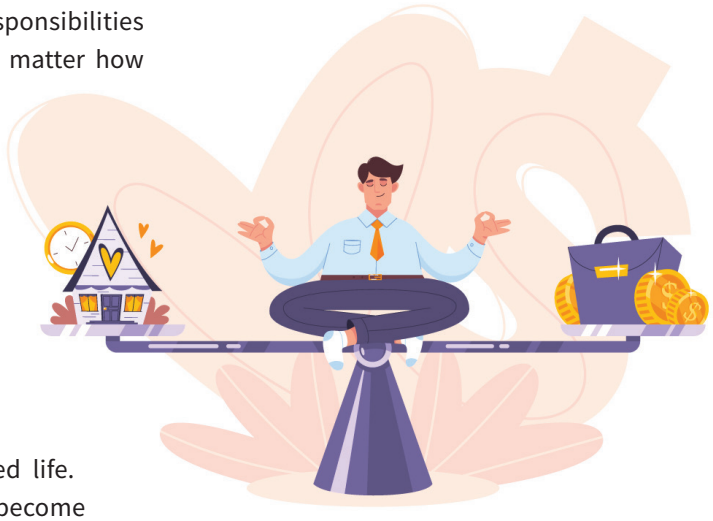
Further to this, Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ said: *"A person who works to keep one's family from becoming needy to other people is like the one who engages in jihād (struggle) for the sake of Allah."* [5]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Jumuʾah (62), Verse 10.
2 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 12, P. 49.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 37.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥar al-Anwār*, Vol.100, P. 103.
5 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 17, P. 67.

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

> "Worshiping Allah has seventy portions, and the most virtuous of these is to seek (sustenance) through the permissible *(ḥalāl)*." [6]

In Islam, any job is respected and encouraged, as long as it is *ḥalāl*, even if it is seen to be trivial or lowly by people, and as long as one is able to fulfill their responsibilities while taking on this job. Similarly, any job which involves *ḥarām*, no matter how prestigious, is despised and forbidden.



It is clear then that being lazy and deliberately avoiding being occupied when one is able to goes against the recommendations of Islam. As Muslims living in the West, we should not be the kind of people who sit at home and claim welfare payments from the government when we have the ability to work—especially if this means having to be dishonest. Instead, Muslims should be known for being honest and hard-working.

Islam recommends that we make a decent living and live a balanced life. This means that we should not become greedy in seeking wealth or become workaholics. In addition, we should never engage in any forbidden acts when doing business—it is better to lose money than to do something *ḥarām* to gain it.

IMPERMISSIBLE BUSINESSES

While Islam generally encourages us to not be lazy and to fulfill our responsibilities which may include working, there are some types of business which are strictly forbidden. These are businesses which cause harm to society and its members, either physically or mentally. We will list some of these below.

PROHIBITION OF TRANSACTING IN SPECIFIC FOODS

The rules related to transactions involving food and drink were covered in the Grade 9 lesson on Rules of Food and Drink. In summary, transactions involving alcohol and foods which are *najis* are not permissible. In this lesson, we will look at rules relating to other types of transactions.

RULES RELATED TO WORKING IN SERVICE INDUSTRIES

In today's world, it is very common to work in service industries where rather than selling physical goods (such as a car), a business or a person offers a service. This includes working in fields like:

- Architecture
- Project Management

6 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol. 13, P. 12.

- Web Design and IT solutions
- Marketing and Advertising

If we are considering a career in these fields, then we need to be careful and keep the following in mind:

- It is not permissible to provide services to companies whose primary or main purpose is something *ḥarām*. Examples include gambling companies, companies who produce indecent media, and companies who sell wine or beer.
- If a company engages in some *ḥarām* activities, but this is not its primary purpose, then it is still permissible to provide services to that company.
    - ▷ For example, an architect can design a building which will primarily be used as office suites, but may include a bar which will sell alcohol.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about your future and what career choices you are considering. Can you find any impermissibilities in your career choice? Would it involve permissible or impermissible transactions? Why?

ISLAMIC BUSINESS PRACTICES RULES RELATED TO OWNING A BUSINESS, AND THE SALES AND FINANCE INDUSTRIES

Here we will discuss some business practices which are forbidden in Islam. The reason for these practices being forbidden is to maintain justice and avoid exploitation.

Cheating

Cheating, fraud, or deception in a transaction or trade makes the earning through that transaction *ḥarām*.

Unfortunately, cheating and fraud are very common in the business world, and there is a mentality that "If you can get away with it, then go for it." If we own our own business or work in sales, then we need to be very mindful of these rules, and make sure that the strategies or methods we are using to sell the product are not a form of cheating the customer.

Through various narrations, we see that lawful sustenance and truthfulness in this regard are highly valued so one who takes on the role of trading and business must respect this position by remaining honest. Imām aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ said: *"A person who cheats is not one of us."* [7]

Hishām says that *"One day, I was sitting in the shade, selling something (either clothes or dates) for Saberī. When Imām al-Kāẓim passed by me, he told me: 'Indeed selling in the shade is cheating, and cheating is not permissible.'"* [8]

The definition of cheating in Islam when it comes to transactions is that a person takes money, but in return gives something other than what the customer thinks they are actually buying. Some examples are selling milk mixed with water when the buyer thinks he is buying pure milk, or selling old car parts as if they are new ones.

7 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 17, P. 279.
8 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 5, P. 160.

A person came to Imām aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ and said: *"I sell caps, and I put old cotton inside the caps, but do not tell people about this."* The Imām ﷺ said: *"I prefer that you tell them what material you have used."* [9]

The wording of the Imām ﷺ indicates that although it is not forbidden to sell poorer quality things, one should not sell them at the price of a higher quality thing, and one should inform the people about this.

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ went to the market where grains were being sold. He said to a particular shop-keeper:

"Your food looks good, how much is it?" Just then, Allah ﷻ revealed to him to place his hand in the pile of grains and grab some grains from the bottom of the pile. When he did this, he saw bad grains hidden at the bottom of the pile. So the Prophet ﷺ told him: *"You are betraying and cheating the Muslims."* [10]

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHEATING

It is common sense to not cheat others because we do not like to be cheated ourselves. In addition to this, cheating can cause a business to fail. The following narrations indicate this:

- There was a woman called Zaynab who sold perfume. She used to come and sell perfume to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ once said to Zaynab: *"When you sell, remain righteous and do not deceive. This is more pure and protects your goods for longer."* [11]
- In another narration, Imām aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ said: *"Avoid deception, because the one who deceives others, others will deceive them. If they have no wealth, then they will be cheated with regards to their family."* [12]
- The Noble Prophet ﷺ said: *"Whoever deceives one's Muslim brother [or sister], Allah will take away the blessings from their sustenance, spoil their livelihood, and leave them to themselves."* [13]

9 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 17, P. 282.
10 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 12, P. 209.
11 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 12, P. 209.
12 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 12, P. 209.
13 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 12, P. 210.

Activity 5.1a: Scenarios

In the following scenarios, according to Islamic standards, state whether the person is cheating in their business or not. Justify your answers.

1. Muhammed is a car salesman, and often deals with both new and used cars. He provides prospective owners with the car reports stating the history of the vehicle, and whether or not it has been in an accident before. However, this does not include the condition of the tires, and whether or not they are worn out and will need to be replaced soon.

2. Zaynab has a part-time job in a bakery—cleaning and stocking the shelves. Some of the baked goods contain ingredients that are not *ḥalāl*, such as lard or alcohol. She always informs the Muslim customers which products are *ḥarām*.

3. Ahmed owns his own Islamic clothing store. Some of the materials are from China and of a cheaper quality, while others are from Turkey and made from higher quality fabrics. He does not differentiate between the two and sells them all at the same cost.

CAN WE CHEAT NON-MUSLIMS?

Cheating is forbidden, no matter who we are dealing with. Cheating in business with non-Muslims is forbidden *(ḥarām)* and is not allowed, and the sin would become even more severe if the image of Islam is tarnished by this.

Bribery

Bribery is when we pay someone an illegal fee in order to do a favor for us. Examples include when a person pays a bribe so that their application for a driving license is accepted even though they did not pass the test.

Bribery is forbidden in all legal systems, and this is the case in Islam as well. This is a matter of common sense, because bribery leads to injustice, discrimination, and other problems.

In Islam, the person giving the bribe, taking the bribe, and anyone else involved in the negotiations with the bribery are all committing a sin, and the wealth gained in this way is *ḥarām*. Even if a bribe is given in the form of a gift or commission, it still remains *ḥarām*.

Taking bribes when a person is in the position of judgment or giving judgments is particularly bad. Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ said: *"Taking bribes when judging is disbelief in Allah, the Almighty."* [14]

The only exception to the above rule is if a person has no choice but to pay a bribe in order to do things that are important or necessary for one's livelihood, and/or to get one's rights. Unfortunately, this is the case in many so-called Muslim countries. However, the person receiving the bribe is still committing a mortal sin and will be punished, and it is as if they have lost their faith. If a person takes a bribe, then the money gained through that bribe is not the possession of that person, and if they use that money, then it is like using stolen money.

Usury

Usury–*ribā* [15] as it is referred to in Arabic—is when a lender gives a loan to a person, but charges them extra for that loan. For example, if a person gives a loan of $1000 to another individual, but charges them a fee of 10% for every month that the debtor does not pay them back—this means that if the debtor does not pay back the lender for a year, they will then owe them $2200. This is referred to as usury or *ribā*, and is not allowed in Islam.

When it comes to transactions, the verses of the Qurʾān and the narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, are much fewer than those about the laws of worship—perhaps because transactions are often common sense things.

However, usury (*ribā*) is an exception, and there are six verses in relation to usury in the Qurʾān, showing just how important it is to avoid this. Usury was very common during the Age of Ignorance, so Allah ﷻ made it impermissible in a gradual manner, until He finally made it absolutely forbidden. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"Those who consume usury (ribā) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Satan leading them to insanity. That is because they say: 'Trading is like usury (ribā),' however, Allah has permitted trading and forbidden usury. So whosoever receives an admonition from one's Lord and stops eating usury shall not be punished for the past–their case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns [to usury], such are the dwellers of the Fire—they will abide therein forever." [16]

In this verse, we understand the following:

- The Qurʾān describes that the one who takes usury is like one who is struck by Satan.
- They suffer in this way because they claim there is no difference between trading and usury.
- Allah ﷻ advises the believers to leave usury if they are truly believers.
- Allah ﷻ warns people that if they do not leave usury, then they are opening themselves to warfare from the Almighty One.

14 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 27, P. 222.

15 *Ribā* is often translated into English as 'interest,' but interest is often understood to be what banks give to a person who keeps their money invested in their bank, but this is different from the concept of *ribā*–thus we will translate it as usury in this lesson.

16 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 275.

In today's world, a clear example of usury is what loan sharks do. Loan sharks lend some money to people who are desperate and in dire need, but then charge huge interest rates which exploit people.

When it comes to banks, there has been some discussion amongst our scholars recently about whether the loans banks give are usury or not. The discussion about this is for a higher level. But at this stage, the interest that banks charge is still jurisprudentially considered to be usury.

When it comes to practical situations however, most scholars allow a person to take a loan from a non-Muslim bank in a Western country even if the bank charges interest. This is because those in need of the loan themselves are not the ones who are setting the conditions for the interest.

- Technically in these situations, a person should take the money from the bank without the intention of taking it as a loan or paying interest, even if they are signing documents and later paying back the loan and/or interest on the loan. Please refer to the rulings of your *marjaʿ* for the details on how this loan can be taken in a proper Islamically-allowed manner.

Similarly, it is permissible to receive interest from a non-Muslim bank in a non-Muslim country; as this is usually given by the banks themselves when we keep or invest money in their banks.

OTHER FORBIDDEN TRANSACTIONS

Dogs

- Dogs are impure *(najis)* in themselves. Therefore, we cannot engage in business related to dogs, including buying pet dogs.
- The exception to this is a hunting-dog. We are allowed to keep this kind of dog, and also sell or buy these types of dogs.
- According to some scholars, shepherd dogs and guard dogs are also allowed. It is permissible to borrow or rent dogs needed for other valid purposes, and if such dogs are needed, then it is best to keep them outside of the house.

Imām aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ was asked about the profit gained from selling a non-hunting dog. He said: *"This is forbidden, but profit from selling a hunting-dog is okay."* [17]

Gambling

Gambling is one of the major sins in Islam, so being involved in any business that incorporates gambling is impermissible. This prohibition is clearly expressed in the Qurʾān, and the term used to describe gambling is '*al-maysir*' which literally means 'easy gain/loss.'

- Gambling of any type is impermissible. This includes betting on sporting matches, online poker, poker machines, lottery, and so on.
- Engaging in any business that involves gambling is not allowed. For example, working in a casino, selling lottery tickets, helping to create a gambling website, or being a bookie are all impermissible.
- Selling or buying instruments or equipment that would solely be used for the purposes of gambling (e.g. poker cards) is impermissible.

Investments and Shares

Investing in companies or buying shares in companies is a common practice today. It is not considered a form of gambling and is generally permissible. However, it is important to understand that when we invest or buy shares in a company, we are:

- Supporting this company and allowing it to continue running its business projects, and

17 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 17, P. 118.

- Entering into a part-ownership of this company, and are therefore partially responsible for its business dealings.
- Therefore, before we invest in a company, we must make sure that it meets the following criteria:
  - ▷ It is not supporting oppressive regimes or engaging in oppressive practices itself.
  - ▷ It does not engage in any kind of impermissible *(ḥarām)* transactions.

RULINGS FOR THE ART AND MUSIC INDUSTRIES

Drawings and Sculptures

Drawings which are created for *ḥarām* purposes are impermissible to create. This is something to keep in mind if one is considering a career in the arts, as a graphic designer, or in the gaming industry.

As for sculptures, some *marājiʿ* deem it impermissible to create a sculpture of any living being, while others, such as Āyatullāh Sīstānī, say it is obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāt wājib)* to avoid doing so. Others, like Āyatullāh Khamenei, limit the prohibition to sculptures which would be used for worship or other impermissible acts. In general though, a Muslim cannot for example create a cross that will be venerated by Christians, or an idol that will be worshiped by idol-worshipers.

Music and Singing

Any music or song which is *ḥarām* to listen to cannot be sold as well. We have discussed the rules of what music and songs are *ḥarām* in other lessons. In summary, music and songs which are usually used in gatherings of sin are not permissible.

We are also not allowed to sell the instruments or other products which are directly related to producing and making *ḥarām* music. This includes selling music and songs in an electronic format such as through websites and streaming services.

It is also not permissible to take on a career which involves *ḥarām* music or singing such as becoming a professional musician or singer. This same rule applies to teaching *ḥarām* music or singing.

HELPING OPPRESSORS

Assisting oppressors in their oppression is a major sin in Islam, and should be avoided in all circumstances. Thus, any business which supports an oppressor is forbidden. The Noble Qurʾān commands:

> "And help one another in piety and virtue, and do not help one another in enmity and sin." [18]

Our Imāms ﷺ have said: *"A person who oppresses others, a person who supports this, and a person who is happy with this, will all be companions in the Hellfire."* [19]

Abu Baṣīr, a great companion of the 5th and 6th Imāms, asked Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ if a person is allowed to work in the government of the ʿAbbāsids. Imām aṣ-Ṣadiq ﷺ replied: *"When the Day of Resurrection begins, a sound will be heard that 'Where are the oppressors and their assistants; and those who prepared their instruments (for example, dipped the pens into the ink pad to collect ink so that they could write), or closed a bag for them, or sharpened their pencils. Resurrect all of them with the oppressors at once.'"* [20]

Therefore, we should be very careful NOT to take any post with oppressive governments, or be part of companies that support them. The only exception is if that position will genuinely allow a person to help the believers and stop them from being harmed.

18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 2.
19 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 333.
20 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 17, P. 179.

Activity 5.1b: Review Questions

1. Is the sale of dogs a permissible transaction within Islam? What are the conditions in which dogs are allowed to be purchased?

2. How many verses are there in the Qurʾān that refer to usury? Find one (other than the one quoted above) and write the translation of it. What is the ruling related to usury?

3. What is one of the major sins in Islam, and where is it clearly prohibited in the Qurʾān? What is the Arabic term used to refer to it?

Activity 5.1c: Transactions and Our Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

Read the following story, then answer the questions below. Keep in mind while reading the story that:[21]

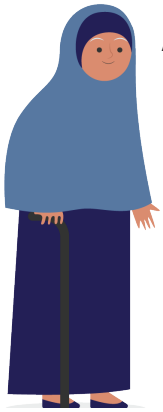
- A shāhī equals around a penny.
- An ʿabbāsī equals four shāhīs.
- A dīnār equals one-fifth of a shāhī.

A man of knowledge was longing to meet Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, and he suffered the agonies of not being granted the chance. For a long time, he underwent severe austerity and spiritual rigors. Ultimately, as a consequence of his vigilance and devotion, he developed some kind of insight and intuition, and occasionally some illuminating flash would be graced upon him.

In one of these mystical states, he was told: *"Your seeing and being granted an audience with Imām al-ʿAsr will not be possible, unless you make a trip to such and such a city."* It sounded quite difficult at first, but for that sacred purpose, the journey seemed trivial.

After several days, the man arrived in that city, and even there he carried on with his self-discipline and ascetic practices in seclusion which lasted 40 days. On the 37th day, he was told: *"Right now, Imām al-ʿAsr is in the bazaar of the blacksmiths in a shop belonging to an old locksmith; so be quick, and go right now and seek his audience."*

He stood up, and as he had seen in his ecstatic vision, he rushed all the way down to the old man's shop where he saw the Noble Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف sitting and conversing amiably with the locksmith. When he greeted them, the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف responded and beckoned him to keep silent, (implying) that he should remain watchful for a wonderful scene.



At that moment, he saw a bent, fragile, old woman with a walking stick come into the shop and show the locksmith a lock with her shaking hand, then she said: *"Will you, for the sake of Allah, buy this lock from me for three shāhīs? I need three shāhīs."*

The old locksmith took a look at the lock and found it intact, so he told her: *"My sister! This lock costs two ʿabbāsīs because its key will cost no more than ten dīnārs; so if you give me ten dīnārs, I will make a key to this lock, then it will be worth ten shāhīs."*

The old woman answered: *"No, I do not need that, I only need the money; if you buy this lock from me for three shāhīs, I will pray for you."*

The old man said with utmost honesty: *"My sister! You are a Muslim, and I too claim to be a Muslim. So why should I buy a Muslim's property for a lower price and deny someone their right? This lock in its current state is worth eight shāhīs; if I want to make a profit from it, then I can buy it from you for seven shāhīs–for it is unfair to make more than a shāhī profit in a deal of only two ʿabbāsīs. If you are sure you want to sell it, then I will buy it for seven shāhīs; but I repeat again, that the real price is two ʿabbāsīs (so eight shāhīs). Since I am a businessman, I will buy it for one shāhī less (so that I can then sell it and make some profit as well)."*

The old woman perhaps did not believe what the man said. She was upset and complained that nobody had been willing to buy the lock for the price she wanted. She said she begged them to buy it for three shāhīs, because ten dīnārs would not have sufficed her. The old locksmith then paid seven shāhīs to the old woman and purchased it from her.

When the woman turned around to leave, the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف said to that man (who was desiring to meet him):

"My dear! Did you see this wonderful scene? You do likewise too, and become like that, then I will come to see you. There is no need for ascetic seclusion, and resorting to Jafr (numerical symbolism). Extreme acts of self-discipline and various travels are not required; instead show good actions [have righteous manners] and be a [true, practicing] Muslim so that I can interact with you. From all the people of this city, I picked out this old man, because he is religious and truly knows [recognizes] Allah. You observed the trial he went through: This old woman requested everyone in the bazaar to fulfill her need, and since they found her desperate and needy, they were all seeking to buy (her lock) for cheaper [than the true price]; and nobody even bought it for three shāhīs. This old man however, told her about its real price, (i. e., eight shāhīs), and negotiated with her to buy it for seven shāhīs. Thus, every week I pay a visit to him, and show kindness and amiability to him." [22]

21 These were just some different currencies that existed at that time.

22 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *The Elixir of Love*. Chapter Two: Occupation. https://www.al-islam.org/elixir-love-muhammadi-reyshahri (with minor editing).

1. How does the way a Muslim conducts business relate to their faith and relationship with Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?

2. What rule(s) of transaction did the locksmith apply with this woman who wanted to sell the lock?

3. Summarize the key lesson learned from the incident narrated above. How does it apply to our lesson about the rules of transactions in Islam?

HISTORY & ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 1

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

1.1 The Prophet's Gift

1.2 Last Days of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

1.3 Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn
(Narration of Two Weighty Things)

1.4 Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī—The Pinnacle of
Self Reformation

1.1 The Prophet's Gift

OBJECTIVES

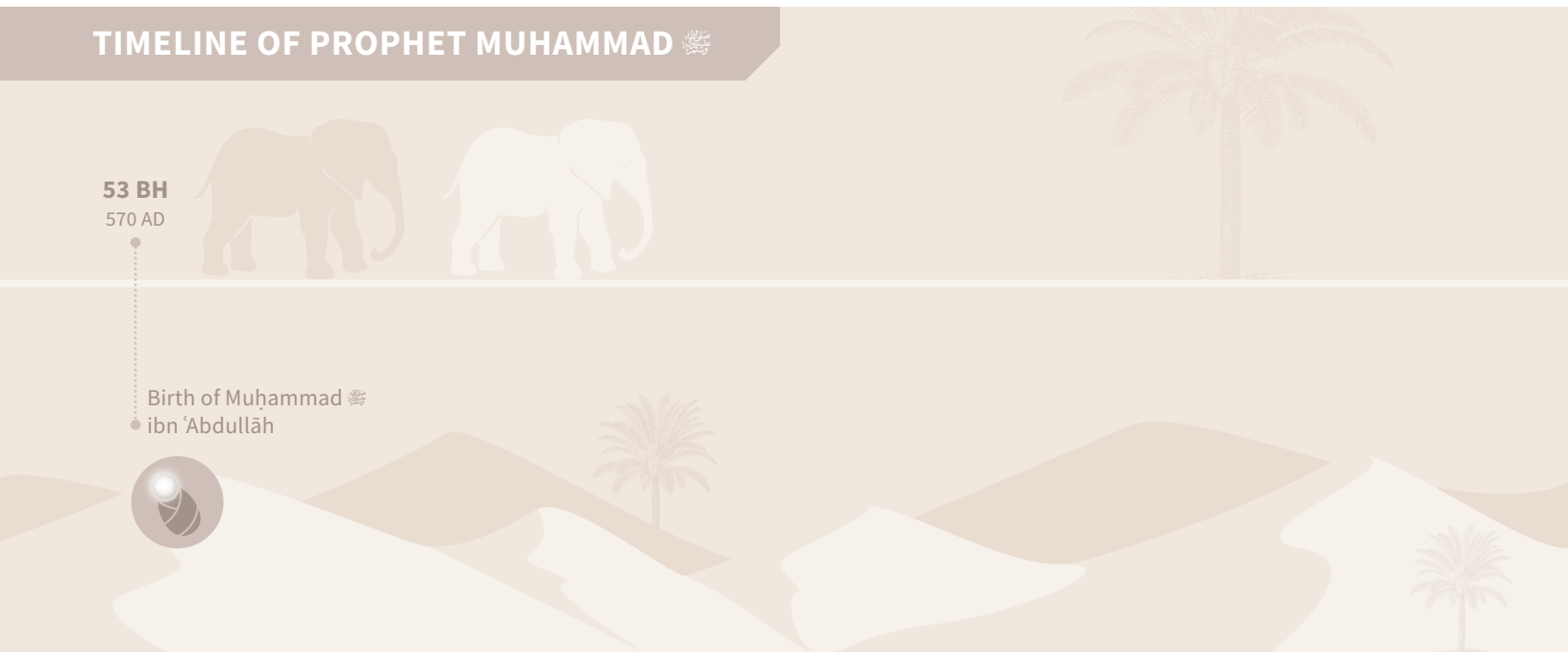
WE WILL:

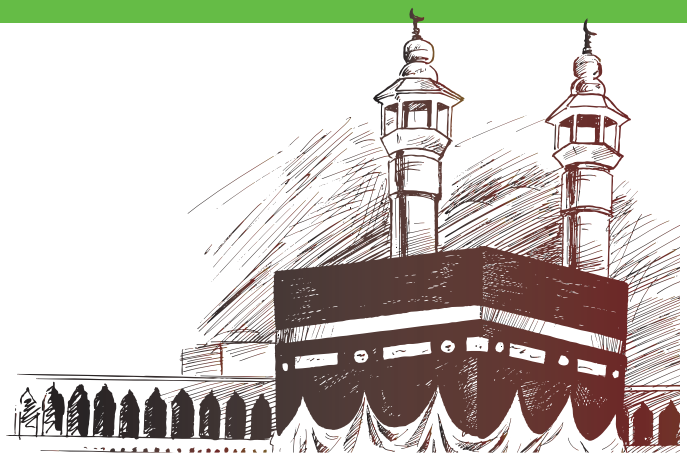
- Renew our knowledge about the *Pledge of Riḍwān*.
- Understand events relating to the *Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah*.
- Demonstrate the struggles of the Muslims before this treaty, and how this treaty changed the circumstances for the Muslims.
- Understand the events surrounding the Battle of Khaybar.

AN OVERVIEW OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

Name	Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh
Kunyah	Abūl Qāsim (and several others)
Title	Khātam al-Anbiyāʾ, al-Muṣṭafā
Parents	ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and Āminah bint Wahb
Date of Birth	17th Rabīʿ al-Awwal 53 BH (570 AD), Known as *Āmul Fīl* (Year of the Elephant)
Birthplace	Mecca, Arabia
Date of Wafāt	28th Ṣafar 11 AH
Place of Wafāt	Medina, Arabia
Lifespan	63 Years
Location of Shrine	Masjid an-Nabawī in Medina, Arabia

TIMELINE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ





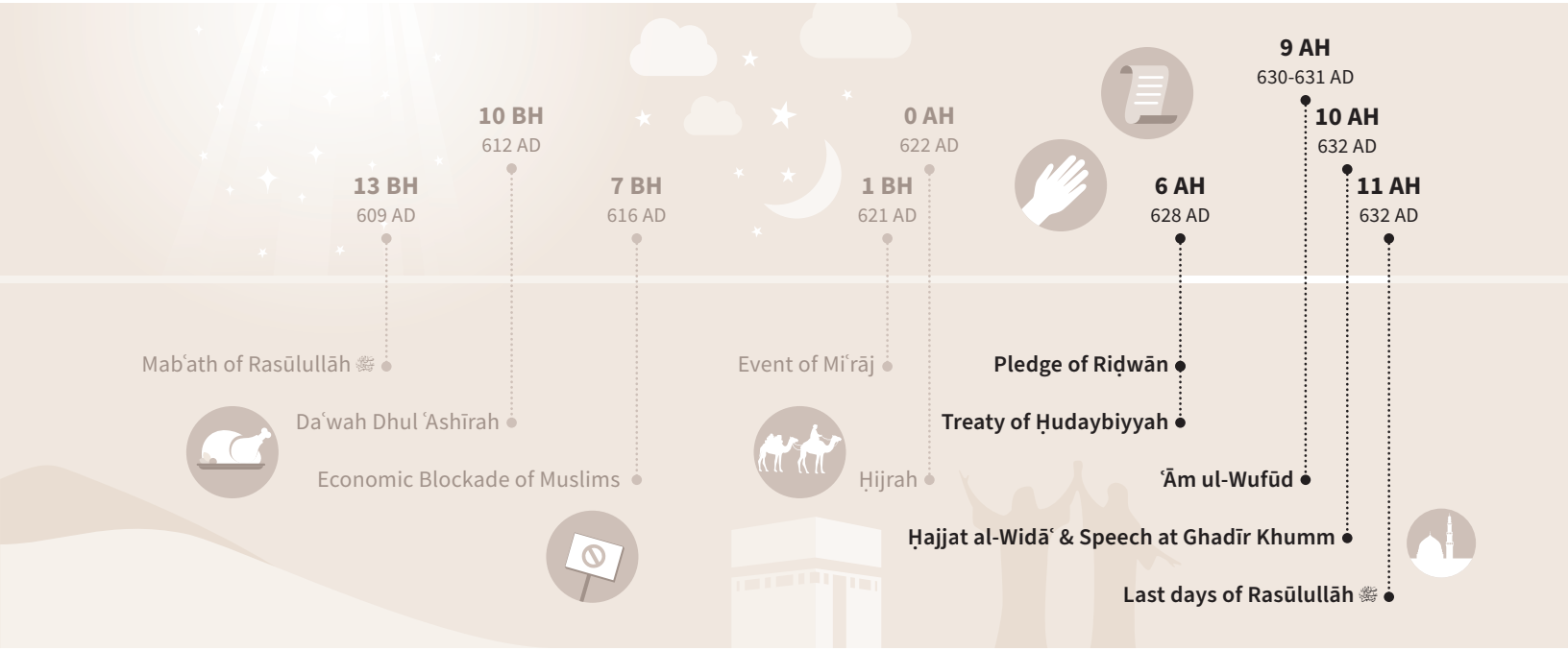
For years, Muslims struggled with the polytheists of Mecca. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ fled to the city of Medina, north of Mecca in 622 AD to escape a conspiracy to assassinate him. This marked the beginning of the new Islamic calendar, which we know today as after Hijrah, or AH.

Soon thereafter, the Meccan polytheists made several attempts to attack the Prophet ﷺ in the city of Medina, but failed. Despite the hostilities that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Muslims faced during the time, the Meccans generally honored the tradition of peace during the *Ḥajj* season. At this time people from all over the region would visit the Kaʿbah in Mecca.

The Prophet ﷺ had a dream from Allah ﷻ that one day he would be able to perform the *ṭawāf* with his followers. In 628 AD (around 6 or 7 AH), the Prophet ﷺ attempted to go to Mecca with over a thousand of his followers in order to perform the minor pilgrimage called *ʿUmrah*.

ḤAJJ is the term used for the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca. For Muslims, the ritual pilgrimage is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for those who meet the requirements like financial stability, physical ability, and so on. The pilgrimage and its rituals are meant to fulfill a Muslim's covenant with Allah ﷻ and cleanse a person of their sins.

ʿUMRAH is the optional and recommended pilgrimage to Mecca that is outside the proper *Ḥajj* time season, and does not meet the strict ritual observances and rules of the obligatory *Ḥajj,* such as the stay at ʿArafāt, going to Muzdalifah, and staying a few days in Minā.



THE TREATY OF ḤUDAYBIYYAH

When the Prophet ﷺ and his followers came close to Mecca, they were stopped at a site known as Ḥudaybiyyah. The leaders of Mecca, already upset that they had lost an attempt to invade Medina the year before, went against regional tradition and custom, and forbade the Muslims from entering the city. This caused great agitation among the Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ sent a message to the Quraysh that he only wished to make the customary seven circuits of the Kaʿbah, sacrifice the animals,[1] then return to Medina with his followers. However, the Quraysh did not agree. Many other messages were sent to them, but the Quraysh would not budge, nor allow the Muslims into Mecca. In an effort to resolve this, the Noble Prophet ﷺ sent Khirāsh ibn Umayyah al-Kaʿbī al-Khuzāʿī toward Mecca on his personal camel. The Quraysh killed the camel, and wanted to kill Khirāsh as well, but instead let him return to the Muslim camp.[2] Eventually, the Prophet ﷺ ordered ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to go to Mecca and explain to the idolaters the purpose of their visit, and to assure them that they had no intention of fighting against anyone. He was to give them a pledge that after performing the rites of *ʿUmrah,* they would leave Mecca immediately and return to Medina. ʿUmar refused to go with the excuse that there was no one in Mecca to protect him against the many enemies that he had there. He suggested however, that the Prophet ﷺ should send ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān with his message to Mecca since the idolaters would not do any harm to him.[3]

The Meccans welcomed ʿUthmān and told him that he was free to perform *ʿUmrah*, but he said that he alone would not perform *ʿUmrah,* and that they had to permit the Prophet ﷺ and all of the Muslims into the city. This was not acceptable to the Quraysh, and it has been reported that they arrested him. It was even rumored that they killed him.

When the rumors of ʿUthmān's 'execution' reached the Prophet ﷺ, he construed the action of the Quraysh as an ultimatum, and asked the Muslims to renew their pledge of loyalty to him. Almost every Muslim pledged their obedience to the Prophet ﷺ regardless of the events which might take place—Imām ʿAlī ؑ being the first one to pledge, and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb being the last one.[4] This renewed pledge is referred to as the *Pledge of Riḍwān.* The Muslims who gave their renewed allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ are referred to as the "Companions of the Tree" since the Prophet ﷺ stood under a tree as they walked past him—giving their newfound oath.

Allah ﷻ says about this in the Noble Qurʾān:

"Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you (O Muḥammad), (actually are) pledging allegiance only to Allah—the hand of Allah is above their hands. Then whoever breaks one's oath, breaks it only to one's own detriment; and whoever fulfills the covenant they have made with Allah, He will give them a great reward."[5]

The resolution of the Muslims to dare the consequences appeared to have put the Quraysh in a more reasonable frame of mind, as they realized that their obstinacy could lead to unnecessary violence. As well, it turned out that ʿUthmān had not been killed as initially rumored, but had only been arrested. They then released him—an act reflecting a change in their attitude.[6]

1 Sacrificing animals—which is called *qurbānī* in Arabic—is a recommended act in *ʿUmrah*, whereas in *Ḥajj,* it is obligatory.

2 Ālūsī, Maḥmūd, *Rūh al-Maʾānī fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, Vol.14, P. 161.

3 Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah,* Vol. 3, P. 780.

4 Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī,* Vol.7, P. 579.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 10.

6 Razwy, Sayyid Ali Asghar, *A Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims.* https://www.al-islam.org/restatement-history-islam-and-muslims-sayyid-ali-asghar-razwy/treaty-hudaybiyya

The Meccans agreed to negotiate a treaty with the Muslims that would allow them to come for pilgrimage the following year. This treaty, which then became known as *The Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah,* included the following clauses:

1. The Muslims would return to Medina that year **without** performing the pilgrimage.
2. They could return the next year for *ʿUmrah* but their stay would not exceed three days.
3. The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.
4. There would be no war between the Quraysh and the Muslims for ten years.
5. Any Meccan who tried to migrate to Medina without the permission of their tribe would be deported back to Mecca even if they were a Muslim, but any Muslim in Medina who wished to return to Mecca even without permission of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) would not be stopped from going there.
6. Any tribe in Arabia would be free to join any of the parties of the Treaty, and the allies of either side would also be bound by this Treaty.[7]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss the four points of this treaty. Knowing the early history of the Muslims, do you think this treaty was in support of the Muslims? Why or why not?

Some of the Prophet's companions became very upset with him. They accused the Prophet ﷺ of breaking his promise that they would go for the pilgrimage. They also accused the Prophet ﷺ of selling out the Muslims because of the fourth clause. Some even went as far as to question the Prophethood of the final Messenger ﷺ.

However, the Prophet ﷺ had not broken any promises. His dream never specified **when** the Muslims would go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but that they would go, in time. According to the treaty, the Muslims in Mecca were now guaranteed safety in practicing their religion. The Prophet ﷺ explained that if any Muslim were to run away from Medina to go back to Mecca, that person was not true in their faith anyway.[8]

7 *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 784.

8 Shahīd Muṭahharī, https://hawzah.net/fa/Book/View/45270/24269/%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%AD-%D8%AD%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%87

Activity 1.1a: Practical Applications

Why were the Muslims upset with the *Treaty of Ḥudabiyyah*? What lessons of etiquettes *(akhlāq)* can be applied here? With a partner, create a digital presentation using the treaty as an example. See the attached rubric for guidance.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most graphics related to the topic, and most of them had a source cited.	Most graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. All graphics had a source cited.	All graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining somewhat accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose and lacked quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

In the event of the *Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah*, the Prophet (ṣ) did not seek any advice on this matter. From the beginning, he was not guided or swayed by the wishes of the people, but by the command of Allah ﷻ. The Noble Qurʾān says:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا

"Indeed, We have given you (O Muḥammad) a clear victory." [9]

Furthermore, this treaty ended up being very beneficial for Muslims as it allowed those still living in Mecca to practice their religion peacefully. It also allowed various tribes to establish treaties with the Muslims without the fear of reprisals from the Meccans. This permitted Muslims to expand their political networks extensively which later helped Islam establish itself permanently in the Arabian Peninsula. The treaty however, did not last too long and was broken by the Meccan polytheists two years later.

FAYʾ: personal gift

THE LAND OF FADAK

Around the same year, the Muslims faced a threat from a different group of people: the Jews of Khaybar. They were oppressing the Muslims and had started mischief. The Muslims—led by Imām ʿAlī ﷺ—engaged in a defensive attack against the tribes of Khaybar.

The tribes barricaded themselves in a huge fort that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ miraculously removed the door to. No one else was able to do this. As a gesture of goodwill, the Jews of Khaybar presented the Prophet ﷺ with a **personal gift** *(fayʾ)* in the form of fertile land that was used as a garden. This land was known as Fadak and was gifted by the Prophet ﷺ to Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ.

From an Islamic law perspective, Fadak was different from war booty, which was to be divided among Muslims. It was a personal gift that was given to the Prophet ﷺ. Personal gifts could be used by the Prophet ﷺ for personal use and passed down to his children without having to be shared with other Muslims. It was, in a sense, 'private' property, and thus he was permitted to do whatever he wanted to with it.

The Prophet ﷺ and his family always lived a very humble life. Oftentimes, there would be nights where his family—including his grandchildren—would not eat at all. The Prophet ﷺ took no salary from the public money, and provided for his family through his own hard work. Since the land of Fadak had its own water wells and dates, naturally it became a small source of sustenance for the Prophet ﷺ and his family.

However, upon the death of the final Messenger ﷺ, the land of Fadak which was already in the possession of his daughter, Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ, was stolen from her by some of his so-called companions. This was a prelude to the many calamities that would then befall the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 1.

Activity 1.1b: Review Questions

1. What was the *Treaty of Ḥudabiyyah*?

2. Why was the land of Fadak the right of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﵂? Explain.

3. Who did the Muslims fight in the Battle of Khaybar? What miraculous event occurred?

4. What are the four main points in the *Treaty of Ḥudabiyyah*? How was this a victory for the Muslims?

5. What was the *Pledge of Riḍwān*? How and why did it come about?

1.2 Last Days of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about the events that took place days before the death of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.
- Understand the political situation during the time of the illness and death of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Demonstrate the underlying reasons why Imām ʿAlī ؑ was prevented from becoming the leader and caliph after the Prophet ﷺ.

ILLNESS OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ announced at Ghadīr Khumm that he would soon leave the world, and that Imām ʿAlī ؑ would be his successor after him, several groups were observing events in Medina very closely.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why was the Event of Ghadīr Khumm so important? Why would people be observing Medina carefully?

Out of jealousy toward Imām ʿAlī ؑ, greed for power, and a lack of understanding of a righteous successor (and the concept of Imamate) after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, people were starting to conspire about what they would do after the Prophet's death. Some simply disliked Imām ʿAlī ؑ because of his closeness to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his high status; others could not tolerate that both the Prophet ﷺ and his successor would be from the tribe of Banī Hāshim. Various individuals had personal ambitions and wanted power and leadership. By 10 AH, Islam was firmly established in Arabia, and there was a lot to be gained by taking power and authority. The Quraish of Mecca—led by Abū Ṣufyān—had fought against the final Prophet ﷺ their entire lives; and they lost ownership and governance over Mecca just two years prior when the Victory of Mecca (Fatḥ al-Mecca) happened. They saw an opportunity to regain this power after the demise of the Messenger ﷺ.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself knew that there would be a struggle for power after his death. At the beginning of the month of Ṣafar in 11 AH, he fell quite ill. At the same time, he received news about a potential attack on Medina by the Romans to the Northwest of Arabia. The Prophet ﷺ therefore asked a young man named Usāmah ibn Zayd to lead an army of Muslims against the Romans. Although he was just a youth, Usāmah had proven his skills and loyalty to Islam in a previous battle. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ specifically asked all of the *Muhājirūn* (those who had migrated with the Prophet from Mecca to Medina)—except for Imām ʿAlī ؑ—to leave Medina and join Usāmah's army. Usāmah set out and camped at a place called Jurf—about 3 miles outside of Medina—and everyone was asked to gather there before departing for battle against the enemy.

Some of the leading figures from the *Muhājirūn* refused to go, and outright disobeyed the orders of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They made up excuses for not going, such as saying that Usāmah was too young to be their leader. In reality, due to reports from inside the Prophet's house, they knew that the Prophet ﷺ would not recover from his illness, and they did not want to be absent from Medina when the leadership of the Muslims would pass on to someone else, i.e. Imām ʿAlī ؑ, after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think about what happened at the end of Prophet Muḥammad's life in a political sense. People were so engulfed in the struggle for power that they did not listen to the Prophet ﷺ and went against what he commanded them to do. How can you compare this to the occultation of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه؟ Why is it that we do not have the Imām عجل الله فرجه with us? Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was very disappointed when he found out that people were not leaving Medina to join Usāmah as he had asked them to do. He said: "May Allah curse those who turn away from the army of Usāmah." Unfortunately though, it did not make any difference for many of them.[1]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why did the Prophet ﷺ ask Allah ﷻ to curse those who turned away from the army of Usāmah?

Allah ﷻ reveals in the Noble Qur'ān the importance of obeying the Prophet ﷺ as he is our guide to the true path and religion. The people of that time knew this very well, but they chose not to listen to the Prophet ﷺ who was the guide sent from Allah ﷻ. The person who obeys the Prophet ﷺ has in fact obeyed Allah ﷻ, the All-Wise; and everything that the Messenger ﷺ said or did was by the command of Allah ﷻ, as has been mentioned in the Divine Book as follows: "Nor does he (referring to the Prophet) speak out of [his own] desire: it is just a revelation that is revealed [to him]." [2]

The person who obeys the Prophet ﷺ has in fact obeyed Allah ﷻ

As time passed, the health of the final Prophet ﷺ worsened, and the expedition of Usāmah never took place because of the defiance of the people. It is interesting to note that later on, when Imām ʿAlī عليه السلام was denied his right, one of the reasons that was given was this same excuse—that he was 'too young' to lead the Muslims. There were other lame excuses that were also given, such as he jokes too much or that Prophethood and Imamate cannot be in the same house.

1 Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 2, P. 20; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad, *Kitāb al-Milal wan Niḥal*, Vol. 1 P. 29.

2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Najm (53), Verses 3-4.

On some occasions just before his death, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was too ill to even walk on his own, or go to the masjid to lead the prayers. Two of his wives—ʿĀʾishah and Ḥafṣah—would argue for their own fathers to lead the *ṣalāh*. ʿĀʾishah would say: "Tell Abū Bakr to lead the *ṣalāh*" (meaning her father), and Ḥafṣah would argue that: "Tell ʿUmar to lead the *ṣalāh*," since he was her father. However, the Prophet ﷺ then would get up, lean on a stick with help from Imām ʿAlī ؑ, with a bandage tied around his head, and would go to the masjid to lead the *ṣalāh* himself.[3]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why do you think these two wives of the Prophet ﷺ argued over who should lead the *ṣalāh*?

There came a time however, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ could not even get up from bed. On a Thursday—four days before he passed away—a large number of his companions came to see him. The Prophet ﷺ said to the people: "Bring me a pen and paper so that I may dictate something to you so that you will never go astray after me." [4]

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who was present, knew that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to put in writing that his successor would be Imām ʿAlī ؑ. So he began to shout: "This man is talking nonsense! The Book of Allah is enough for us!" [5] Others in the room were shocked to hear this and began shouting that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ must be given a chance to write his will. Before long, everyone in the room was shouting at each other, in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ who was so ill.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ knew that even if he insisted on writing a will now, ʿUmar would argue that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not himself when he wrote it. So he told all the people: "Get out and leave me alone!" [6] This was a very sad event. People would remember this event much later on in time, and they would weep bitterly. This event became known as the Calamity of Thursday.

3 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād,* Vol. 1, Pp. 122-133.

4 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol. 3, P. 193. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

5 *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol. 3, P. 193; Ibn Saʿd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā,* Vol. 2, P. 188. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources)

6 *Al-Irshād,* Vol. 1, P. 174.

Activity 1.2a: Summary

Write a one page summary about the tragedy that happened right before the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, specifically the Calamity of Thursday.

Use the following resources:
- The Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 2.
- The traditions from the Ahlus Sunnah https://www.al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia/tragedy-thursday.

Be sure to consult the writing rubric.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Grammar	There are 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There are 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There are 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes in the poster/script.
Focus and Details	The topic and main ideas are not clear.	Main idea is somewhat clear but lacks supporting evidence.	The main idea is very clear however, supporting evidence and details are lacking.	There is a clear and focused main idea supported by ample detail and evidence.
Voice/Intent	Author's voice and intent of writing is not apparent.	Author's voice/intent is somewhat apparent but leaves the audience with many questions.	Author's voice is strong with a clear purpose, but still leaves the audience with some questions.	Author's voice and knowledge on the topic is strong and fully addresses all audience questions.
Accuracy	Content presented is not accurate or compelling.	Content presented contains much misinformation and lacks quality.	Content presented is mostly accurate but still demonstrates quality work.	Content presented is extremely compelling and accurate.
Teacher's Comments				

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away on Monday, the 28th of Safar, 11 AH at the time of *Ẓuhr*. In his last moments, he was surrounded by his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ were hugging the Prophet ﷺ as he laid on the bed with his head on the lap of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ sat beside her father crying. At one point, the Prophet ﷺ opened his eyes and whispered something to his daughter Fāṭimah ﷺ, and she smiled.[7] When she was asked later on why she smiled, she said that her father had told her she would be the first person from his family to join him in Heaven.[8] Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ passed away within two and half to three months after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left this world.

7 *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā,* Vol. 2, P. 202. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

8 Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī,* P. 400.

Activity 1.2b: Timeline

Create a timeline to mark the events of the final days of the Prophet ﷺ.

DEMISE AND BURIAL

The Angel of Death *(Malakul Mawt)* asked for permission before he entered the house of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ where the Prophet ﷺ was staying just before his death. He even asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ if he wanted to remain in this world longer. However, the Prophet ﷺ knew the Will of Allah ﷻ and chose to return back to Him. When the Noble Messenger ﷺ took his last breath, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ placed his palm near the mouth of the Prophet ﷺ and wiped his face with this last breath.[9]

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ personally carried out the funeral rites of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The Imām ﷺ went down in the grave, then lowered his blessed body into there. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ wept a lot over the loss of the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying:

> "We have suffered a lot because of your loss, O beloved of our hearts! In losing you, revelation from Allah has been cut off from us! But from Allah we come and to Him is our return!" [10]

Before the burial of the Prophet ﷺ, Muslims came in small numbers to pray over his blessed body. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ told them that no one could lead the *ṣalāh* in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so everyone prayed without a leader. The grave was dug in the exact same spot where he passed away.

There were less than ten people present for the washing and burial of the body of the final Messenger ﷺ.[11] The most prominent companions, including Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, were completely absent, busying themselves over who should be the next leader. They did not even pray the funeral prayers over the body of the Prophet ﷺ.[12]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had lived his entire life in perfect submission to Allah ﷻ. He was immaculate in every way: his life was blameless, and his character was unmatched. Allah ﷻ praised him in the Noble Qurʾān in the following way:

وإنك لعلى خلقٍ عظِيمٍ

And indeed, you possess a great moral character. [13]

Allah ﷻ also referred to his final Messenger ﷺ in the Noble Qurʾān with several unique and extraordinary titles such as: The Bearer of Good News *(Bashīr)*, the Warner *(Nadhīr)*, a Brilliant Lamp *(Sirāulj Munir),* and a Mercy for all the Worlds *(Raḥmatun lil ʿĀlamīn).* Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ had surrendered himself to Allah ﷻ so completely that the Almighty even took credit for his actions. When the Messenger ﷺ fought the enemy, or threw a handful of dust at them, Allah ﷻ said:

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۚ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَمَىٰ…

…And you (referring to the Prophet) did not throw when you threw, rather, it was Allah who threw… [14]

When people pledged allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ, Allah ﷻ said:

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ ٱللَّهَ يَدُ ٱللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۚ …

Indeed, those who swear allegiance to you (O Muḥammad), they (are actually) pledging allegiance only to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands… [15]

9 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon 193.

10 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon 235.

11 According to some narrations, only three people were in charge of the bathing *(ghusl)* and shrouding *(kafan)*, and they were: Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, Faḍl ibn ʿAbbās, and Usāmah ibn Zayd; and four people went inside the grave to place the blessed body there, and they were: Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, Faḍl ibn ʿAbbās, Usāmah ibn Zayd, and perhaps ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf. [Reference is: *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā,* Vol. 2, Pp. 262 and 281. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)]

12 According to some sources of the Ahlus Sunnah, they offered their prayers on the body, but were missing during the actual burial.

13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qalam (68), Verse 4.

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 17.

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 10.

EVENTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH

As soon as the Prophet ﷺ passed away and the weeping voices of the Banī Hāshim could be heard, some of the people came in to verify that indeed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had passed away. This was despite the fact that Imām ʿAlī ؑ had already stated that the Prophet ﷺ had died.

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in particular behaved very strangely. He came in, looked at the face of the Messenger ﷺ, then began shouting that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ had not passed away, but he has gone to meet his Lord and will return. He then pulled out his sword and shouted: "If anyone says that the Messenger of Allah is dead, I will behead him with my sword!" [16]

It is not clear why he behaved like this, but some people theorize that it was as if he was buying some time. As soon as Abū Bakr was called, he came, removed the cloth from the Prophet's face, and recited Verse 144 of Sūrah Āl ʿImrān.[17] Finally, ʿUmar then calmed down.[18] Someone came to tell them that people had gathered at a place called *Saqīfah* to discuss the leadership after the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, so the two men left hurriedly to go there, leaving Imām ʿAlī ؑ and the others to attend to the blessed body of the final Messenger ﷺ. One should question the fact that rather than mourning the loss of the greatest human being to ever walk upon this Earth, some of these individuals were more occupied with who should succeed him and become the next caliph.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think that the final Prophet ﷺ—the greatest man to have ever lived—was buried in isolation with only a handful of people present to lay him down to rest?

Peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon the last Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and his pure and immaculate Household—the Ahlul Bayt ؑ.

16 *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol. 3, P. 300.

17 This verse is as follows: *"Muḥammad is not but a Messenger. (Other) messengers have passed away before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels (to disbelief)? And the one who turns back on their heels will never harm Allah at all; and Allah will reward the grateful."*

18 Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah,* Vol. 12, P. 195.

Activity 1.2c: Review Questions

1. Describe the “Calamity of Thursday” in your own words.

2. What was the political situation at the time of the death of the Prophet ﷺ? How is this a tragic history for the Muslims?

3. Why did ʿUmar say that the Prophet ﷺ was out of his senses at the time when he wanted to write his last will?

4. How is disobeying the Prophet ﷺ disobeying Allah ﷻ? Bring a verse of the Qurʾān as proof to support your answer.

1.3 Hadīth ath-Thaqalayn (Narration of Two Weighty Things)

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the deeper connection to *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn* (Narration of the Two Weighty Things).
- Learn to apply this *ḥadīth* in our lives today.
- Differentiate and examine the *ḥadīth* from different sources.

THAQALAYN:
two weighty things

Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn is a famous narration in which Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ promised that two weighty things—the Noble Qurʾān and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—will never separate from one another, and will provide guidance for us if we attach ourselves to them. This *ḥadīth* has been narrated from several different narrators, and has been granted the status of *mutawātir*, which means that there is absolutely no doubt about its authenticity in any of the schools of thought. In fact, not only is it accepted by the different schools of thought, but it has been mentioned in the *Ḥadīth* books of the different schools. The text varies slightly in each narration, but the core message in all of them is the exact same.

STOP AND REFLECT: Recall what you have learned about *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn* in previous lessons. Why is this *ḥadīth* so important?

This particular narration of *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn* is referenced in *Al-Kāfī,* which is one of the four most important Shīʿah sources of *Ḥadīth,* and it is reported there as follows:

إِنِّی تَارِک فِیکمْ أَمْرَینِ إِنْ أَخَذْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا- کتَابَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ أَهْلَ بَیتِی عِتْرَتِی أَیهَا النَّاسُ اسْمَعُوا وَ قَدْ بَلَّغْتُ إِنَّکمْ سَتَرِدُونَ عَلَی الْحَوْضَ فَأَسْأَلُکمْ عَمَّا فَعَلْتُمْ فِی الثَّقَلَینِ وَ الثَّقَلَانِ کتَابُ اللَّهِ جَلَّ ذِکرُهُ وَ أَهْلُ بَیتِی

Indeed, I am leaving two things among you, to which if you hold onto, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah, Invincible and Majestic is He; and my Ahlul Bayt, my progeny (ʿitrah).[1] O people! Listen, for certainly I have delivered the message to you: Definitely you will enter my presence at the pond, and I will ask you about what you did with these two weighty things (the Thaqalayn), and these two weighty things (Thaqalayn) are the Book of Allah, Exalted is His mention; and my Ahlul Bayt. [2]

One of the six authentic *(Ṣaḥīḥ)* books of the Ahlus Sunnah quotes it in this way:

كَأَنِّي قَدْ دُعِيتُ فَأَجَبْتُ، إِنِّي قَدْ تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ: أَحَدُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الآخَرِ، كِتَابُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَعِتْرَتِي، فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ تَخْلُفُونِي فِيهِمَا، فَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ

It is as if I have been called, so I have answered. Truly, I have left the Thaqalayn among you, one of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, and my progeny (ʿitrah or Ahlul Bayt). So look at how you will behave with them after me, indeed they will never separate from each other until they enter my presence by the pond. [3]

It is an undeniable *ḥadīth*, and even contemporary Salafī scholars, like Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Bānī, accept it. The other versions, which say that the *Thaqalayn* are the *Kitāb* or *Sunnah* are weak.

1 Due to different wordings of this *ḥadīth*, some use Ahlul Bayt specifically, whereas others use *ʿitrah* which means family.

2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol.1, P. 294.

3 Nasāʾī, Aḥmad, *Sunan an-Nasāʾī*, Ḥadīth #8148.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ announced the intertwined nature of these two, and he wanted to establish for all of humankind that guidance is provided **only** by the Divine in the form of the Noble Qurʾān and the 12 Imāms ﷺ until the Day of Judgment. Practically speaking, we should be looking to the Noble Qurʾān and the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ for all of our intellectual, practical, and jurisprudential needs. This means that we reject anything which fails to meet the criteria, or goes against the Noble Qurʾān or the immaculate beings. We must accept whatever they accept, and reject whatever they reject. These two weighty things will help us decipher which efforts are worthy of our time and which are not.

It is by these two standards that we will be judged and questioned. What did we do with these two weighty things which have been entrusted to our care? Did we follow their words, examples, and instructions? Did we pay heed to the lessons embedded in the stories of the Qurʾān and the lives of the 12 Imāms ﷺ? These are questions worthy of our consideration and reflection when looking at our lives.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner make a list of some different ways that we can implement *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn* into our lives? Why do we need **both** of these weighty things, and cannot follow only one of them? How can we be sure that we are entrusting them to our care? Be prepared to share your answers with the class and participate in a discussion.

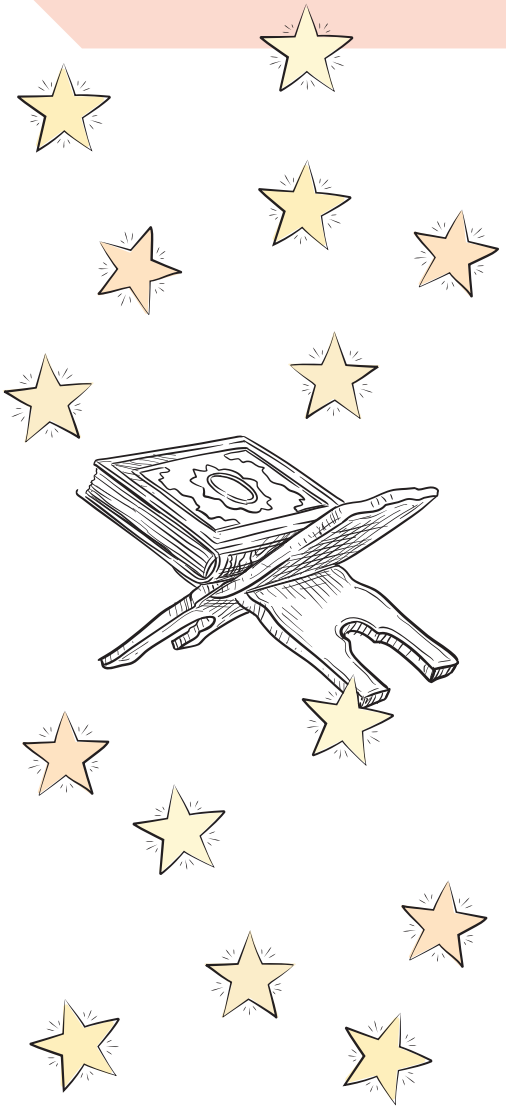
We as Muslims, must guard and follow the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ just as we guard and follow the Noble Qurʾān. These two weighty things work together for one purpose: To establish closeness and consciousness of Allah ﷻ. This tradition verifies the Divine link between this world and the next world. In our current era, our awaited 12th Imām عجل الله فرجه is the embodiment of the second part of this tradition, and since the two will never separate from each other until the Day of Judgment, surely we have both weighty things here with us.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can we fulfill our responsibility of abiding by the *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn.*

These two weighty things—the Noble Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ—have been generously provided to us for guidance. The question is not a matter of how we will access them, but how will we prioritize their teachings in our lives? We will be questioned about both of these trusts that the Noble Prophet ﷺ left for us. Will we be able to say that we truly honored them? Or is the Noble Qurʾān another book that is abandoned on our shelves—collecting dust? Are the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ left as forlorn figures in history—not being emulated? We need to look deep within ourselves to answer these questions.[4]

This tradition denotes three major ideological points:

- An obligation to follow the Noble Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.
- The immaculateness of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ because they are inseparable from the Noble Qurʾān.
- The continuation of the Imāms ﷺ [and the concept of Imamate] since these two things—the Noble Qurʾān **and** the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ **together**—will be the source of guidance until the Day of Judgment.



4 This lesson was compiled with the help of the following scholars: Syed Abbas Razavian, Shaykh Salim YusufAli, Shaykh Usama AbdulGhani, and Moulana Zaki Baqri.

Activity 1.3a: Review Questions

1. What is *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn,* and why is it so important?

2. How does *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn* bring us closer to Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?

3. How can we prove the importance of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام to other sects of Islam?

4. What are the three ideological points that *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn* denotes?

5. How can a person implement the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام and the Noble Qurʾān practically in one's life?

Activity 1.3b: Research Project

Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn was mentioned more than one time and in many places by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Below is a list of some of the different times that the Prophet ﷺ narrated this *Ḥadīth:*

- In Ḥajjatul Widāʿ, while riding on a camel, on ʿArafah day
- Near Ghadīr Khumm, and the ḥadīth of Ghadīr is stated after it
- In a sermon on a Friday
- In a congregational prayer in Khayf mosque, on the last day of the tashrīq days
- Over a pulpit
- In the Prophet's last sermon
- In a sermon after his last congregational prayer
- In bed, when he was ill and some of the companions were around him

Choose one of these events, and create a presentation about that event and the surrounding importance in which the Prophet ﷺ narrated this *Ḥadīth*.

Use the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or had no sources.	Some of the graphics were related to the topic, and some of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. Most of the graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all of the borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	The presentation was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	The presentation was displayed somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	The presentation was displayed in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	The presentation was displayed in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The presentation was not convincing or compelling.	The presentation was somewhat convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not fully function as a presentation.	The presentation was extremely compelling and convincing.

1.4 Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī—The Pinnacle of Self Reformation[1]

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Analyze the spiritual transformation of Abū Dharr, and apply it to our own lives.
- Demonstrate the love that Abū Dharr had for Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.
- Understand the characteristics of Abū Dharr as described by Imām ʿAlī ﷺ in *Nahj al-Balāghah.*
- Learn how to reform ourselves through the examples of Abū Dharr.

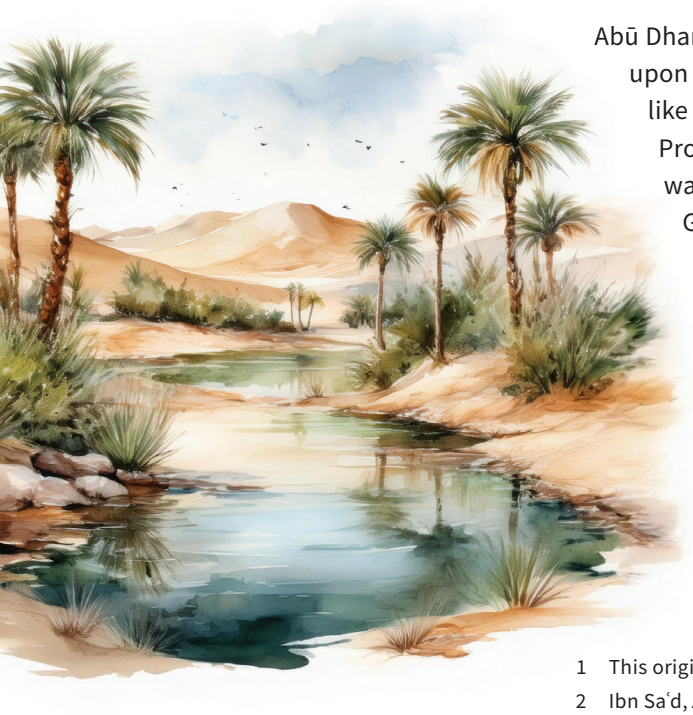
Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī was one of the esteemed companions of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and a faithful supporter of his entire household. Abū Dharr's life was not always under the guiding light of the Prophet ﷺ. Before coming to Islam, Abū Dharr was from the tribe of Ghifār—whose members were well-known for their mischief, especially robbing caravans.[2] The people of that tribe were among the pagan worshipers, and worshiped an idol that they called *Manāt*. However, Abū Dharr is said to have been a monotheist even before the advent of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.[3]

The life of Abū Dharr has many valuable lessons that one can learn from, especially his ability to embrace a complete self-transformation within himself when faced with the truth.

STOP AND REFLECT: How does one go through a spiritual reform?

CONVERSION TO ISLAM

Allah ﷻ has placed within each soul *(rūḥ)* an innate gravitation and desire to turn toward the truth *(ḥaqq)*.



Abū Dharr—although he was not always on the path of Islam—recognized the truth upon witnessing it in the form of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and gravitated toward it like a thirsty man running to an oasis in the desert. Abū Dharr first heard about Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ from a man who came from Mecca. The man said there was someone who claimed to be a Prophet, declaring that there is only one God. For Abū Dharr, this idea of one God inspired deep reflections within him because paganism was something that he had begun doubting even before hearing about the Prophet ﷺ.[4] He once took a bowl of milk to the idol of his tribe, *Manāt*, to see what would happen. A fox came and drank the milk, then urinated on the idol and left. This was the first moment that sparked his curiosity, and caused him to question how a so-called "god" could provide for him and others when it could not even protect itself.[5] Hearing about a Prophet who was a Messenger of God further ignited his curiosity, and led him to travel to Mecca.

1 This original lesson was written by Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau.
2 Ibn Saʿd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā,* Vol. 4, P. 166.
3 *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā,* Vol. 4, P. 201.
4 Shūshtarī, Muḥammad, *Qāmūs ar-Rijāl*, Vol. 11, P. 322.
5 Ibn Hishām, *Aṣ-Ṣīrah an-Nabawīyyah,* P. 136.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What are some reflection questions you can think of that people would ask themselves when beginning to understand religion? What questions do you think sparked curiosity in Abū Dharr to change? Can you think of one example in our time that functions like an idol? Make a list and discuss it with a partner.

While in Mecca, and in search of the Prophet ﷺ, Abū Dharr happened to meet ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؑ. When Imām ʿAlī ؑ found out Abū Dharr's intentions, he took him to meet the Prophet ﷺ, whereupon Abū Dharr attentively listened to his guidance. He was the fourth person to embrace the new path of Islam—which not only altered his life as he knew it, but later on even the lives of his entire tribe. After his conversion, Abū Dharr did not hesitate to ask the Noble Prophet ﷺ what he could do. He was fully at the service of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ told Abū Dharr to travel back home to teach his tribe about Islam. Through his sharing of the truth about one God and Islam, Abū Dharr became successful in converting his family first, then eventually, his entire tribe also converted to the path of Islam.[6]

"If you want to see the piety of ʿĪsā, then look at Abū Dharr."

– The Noble Prophet ﷺ

It is significant to highlight that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ welcomed Abū Dharr with open arms. He became a close companion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as well as a loyal supporter of Imām ʿAlī ؑ. Through learning and practicing the ways of the Prophet ﷺ and his household ؑ, Abū Dharr reached such a high status that the Prophet ﷺ said the following about him: "If you want to see the piety of ʿĪsā, then look at Abū Dharr."[7] This shows us that if we adhere to the path of the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ؑ, then we can move on from our past—even if it was full of wrongdoings. We can still adopt the way of the immaculate ones ؑ and reach great heights of Allah's pleasure. There is always hope in life and we must never feel disheartened. It is never too late to return to Allah ﷻ and ask for His forgiveness. We see that even though Abū Dharr came from a tribe of pagans who committed heinous acts, he ended up becoming one of the most truthful people.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss the concept of repentance. What is the definition of true repentance *(tawbah)*? How can this be applied to Abū Dharr's situation?

6 Ibn ʿAbdul Barr, *Al-Istīʿāb*, Vol. 4, P. 1654. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

7 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, Vol. 66, P. 190 (Ahlus Sunnah Source); ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 22, P. 404.

SUPPORTING THE AHLUL BAYT ﷺ

Abū Dharr was present in Ghadīr Khumm. He knew the value of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, and the position of Imamate in the eyes of Allah ﷻ. At the beginning of the caliphate of Abū Bakr, Abū Dharr refused to pay allegiance to him, and supported Imām ʿAlī ﷺ throughout. During the time of ʿUmar's caliphate, Abū Dharr refused to accept the total ban on narrating/writing *Ḥadīth*—which was imposed by the second caliph. In response, Abū Dharr said: "By Allah, even if they threaten me with a sword to stop narrating Ḥadīth from Prophet Muḥammad, I would rather die than stop narrating the Prophet's Ḥadīth."[8] Thus, Abū Dharr, along with other narrators of *Ḥadīth*, were imprisoned.

During the regime of the third caliph, ʿUthmān, Abū Dharr did not stop the praises of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and spoke up to try to establish truth and justice. Eventually, he was exiled to Syria for criticizing ʿUthmān who was giving away treasury money to family members like Marwān. However, Abū Dharr still continued to create social groups to inform people about true Islam and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Muʿāwiyah prevented people from meeting with Abū Dharr, and reported all of his activities to ʿUthmān. He was then brought back to Medina by force where he met ʿUthmān. Abū Dharr refused to accept any of the gifts that were given to him, and he openly criticized ʿUthmān's actions once again. ʿUthmān—upset and fed up with him—exiled him to ar-Rabadha in the worst possible conditions. It was here that Abū Dharr passed away. The Prophet ﷺ had foretold Abū Darr:

> *"You are a man of Heaven; and how can it not be like this when they will exile you from my city after my death, because of your love for my Ahlul Bayt. You will live alone, and will then pass away lonely in a strange place; but a group (of bypassers) will gain prosperity because of you—they are the ones who will participate in your burial. They will be my companions in Heaven—the very same Heaven that Allah has promised to the pious ones."*[9]

When he was being exiled, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ consoled Abū Dharr as follows:

> *"O Abū Dharr, you have displayed your anger for the sake of Allah. So seek the One for whose sake you became angry. The people feared you because of their desire for this worldly life, while you admonished them because of concern for your religion. Therefore, leave with them that which they feared about from you (this lowly, worldly life—dunyā), and flee from them with that which you admonished them about (your religion). How needy they are to that which you advised them, and how needless you are toward that which they deprived you from. You are the one who will be successful tomorrow; but who will be the one who is more envious? If the heavens and the earth were sealed together over a slave, then if that slave was conscious and fearful of Allah, then Allah will make an escape and exit for that person. So let nothing but the truth bring you solace, for nothing makes a person feel (more of) a stranger except falsehood. If you accepted their lowly life (dunyā), then they would have loved you; and if you had taken a share of it, then they would have provided you with security."*[10]

8 Ibn Saʿd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, Vol. 2, P. 354. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

9 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, Vol. 1, P. 176.

10 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon #130.

Activity 1.4a: Charting and Applying

Analyze the words which Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said to Abū Dharr during his final exile. What characteristics do you find in Abū Dharr that made him a great companion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ?

How can we apply these same qualities to our lives to make the world a better place to live in today?

Characteristic	Evidence from the Sermon	Application to Today's World

The Noble Prophet ﷺ said that from among the companions, there was no one under the sky who was more truthful than Abū Dharr.[11] Even though he came from a rough environment which was filled with injustice and crime, he was able to seek the truth, and evolve into a beacon for justice through the knowledge and understanding of true belief.

ABŪ DHARR'S LOVE FOR THE PROPHET ﷺ

Abū Dharr placed the love of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ above everything and anything else in life. During the Expedition of Tabūk, he set off with the Prophet ﷺ and his army, but Abū Dharr had a weak camel who could not keep up with the rest of the people. He ended up getting separated from the group and lagged three days behind them. Some of the travelers with the Prophet ﷺ claimed that he ran away, but the Prophet ﷺ rejected these sentiments, and instead stated that Abū Dharr would join them if Allah ﷻ Willed.

As the journey progressed, the camel became too tired to travel, and Abū Dharr had no choice but to walk while carrying all of his belongings. Walking a long way with his belongings on his back, and the sun piercing down on him, intense thirst almost completely overcame him. However, his only focus was to be reunited with the Prophet ﷺ. He finally came across some water that had pooled on a rock. He was extremely thirsty and wanted to drink from it, but then refrained from doing so. *How could he drink such cold and refreshing water while his beloved Prophet ﷺ may have been thirsty*, he thought to himself. So he packed some water for the Prophet ﷺ without drinking any himself. He continued to walk, until eventually he reached Tabūk, where he found the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The Messenger ﷺ sent some men to help him with his belongings when they saw Abū Dharr approaching, but then he fainted before he could reach the Prophet ﷺ. Upon seeing his wretched condition, the Prophet ﷺ inquired: "Did you not have any water to drink?!" He replied that he did, but he could never drink it without first having the Prophet ﷺ taste it. Hearing this, the Prophet ﷺ said: "O Abū Dharr! Allah has His special Mercy on you. You will live alone, depart from this world alone, and you will rise alone on the Day of Judgment."[12]

11 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 22, P. 404.

12 *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, Vol. 66, P. 186. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

Today, there are many struggling communities plagued with an obsession of the material world and material factors. This lifestyle—glorified and normalized by popular culture—is destroying our communities. In reality, what we are in desperate need of is the uplifting and spiritual growth of our communities. Abū Dharr, through his disdain and criticism of the actions of Muʿāwiyah and the other oppressors, was an example for us to follow in regard to standing up to corrupt leaders.

One such example was when Muʿāwiyah sent a bribe of 300 dīnārs to Abū Dharr. In response, Abū Dharr said that he would only take the money if it was his share of the public funds, and since it was not, he refused to accept the money. After many instances of Abū Dharr displaying outward criticism of Muʿāwiyah's actions, Muʿāwiyah ordered him to be imprisoned and called him the enemy of Allah and the Prophet.

In response, Abū Dharr replied: "It is not me who is the enemy, rather it is you and your father who are clear enemies of Allah and the Prophet, and pretend to have embraced Islam. Indeed, the Prophet had cursed you."

Muʿāwiyah retorted back: "I am not the one (whom the Prophet cursed)."

Abū Dharr boldly said: "Yes you are. You are the one that I myself heard the Prophet say in regard to: 'O Allah! Curse him (Muʿāwiyah), and do not let him be satiated from eating except by soil.'" [13]

If we follow the example of Abū Dharr by learning and adhering to the teachings of the Immaculate Household ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ, then we too can achieve great things and become beacons of guidance for others. Through our words and actions, maybe we can try to change the dangerous crime-infested neighborhoods in our cities into places of safety where people look out for one another; or we can help society become a better place to live. Indeed, if we wish to help our communities, then we must first change ourselves. Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said the following about Abū Dharr: "He liked three things that others usually do not like: Death, calamity, and poverty." Then the Imām ﷺ continued:

"He liked death (which was) on the path of obedience better than life on the path of disobedience; calamity on the path of obedience better than a joyful life on the path of disobedience; and (he liked) poverty on the path of obedience better than being rich on the path of disobedience." [14]

Just like Abū Dharr reformed himself, then went and taught his tribe about Islam and the Prophet ﷺ, we too can take his life as an example to change and improve ourselves. If we place the love of Allah ﷻ and true Islam in our hearts, then we too can accomplish great things. We have the tools for our own transformation at our fingertips, but it is up to us to use them in order to make a difference in our lives, as well as the lives of others. Those who have true faith and strive hard will be rewarded accordingly, as Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

As for those who have faith and do righteous deeds, they shall have the gardens of Paradise (Firdaws) to abide therein. [15]

13 Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 8, Pp. 256-258 (Ahlus Sunnah Source);ʿĀmilī, Muḥsin Amīn, *Aʿyān ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 4, P. 237.

14 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 8, P. 22.

15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 107.

Activity 1.4b: Review Questions

1. How did Abū Dharr show his love for the Prophet ﷺ in Tabūk?

2. What ways do you think a person can begin to reform oneself?

3. How did Abū Dharr consistently show his love for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ? What happened to him because of this love?

4. How does the concept of repentance play into self-reformation? Why is it important?

CHAPTER 2

Lives of the Maʿṣūmīn علیهم السلام

2.1 Imām ʿAlī's Reign as Caliph

2.2 Last Will of Sayyidah Fāṭimah علیها السلام

2.3 Advice from Imām Ḥasan علیه السلام

2.4 Imām Ḥusayn علیه السلام
and the Aftermath of ʿĀshūrāʾ

2.5 Imām ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Hādī علیه السلام

2.6 Imām Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī az-Zakī al-ʿAskarī علیه السلام

2.7 Imām al-Mahdī's Occultation

2.8 Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف: Return of the Awaited

2.1 Imām ʿAlī's Reign as Caliph

OBJECTIVES

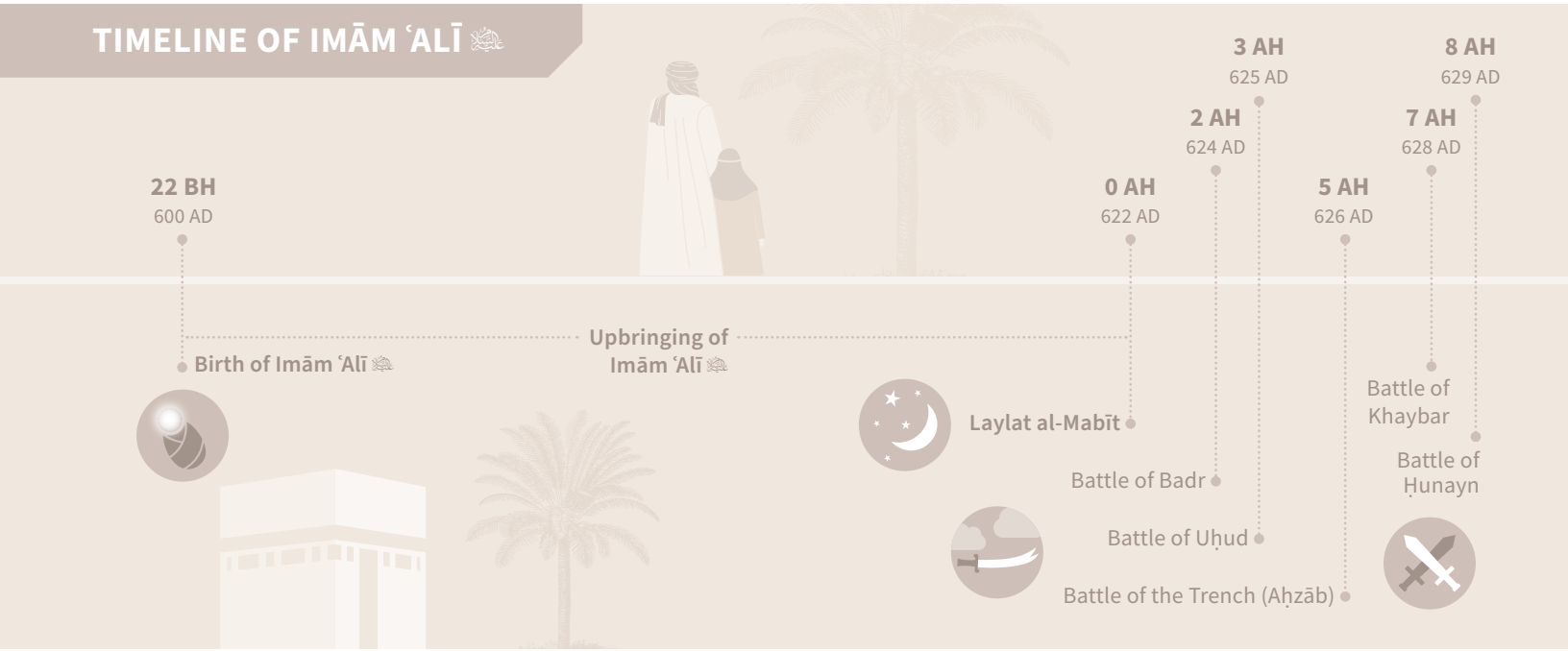
WE WILL:

- Learn the circumstances of the three civil wars during the caliphate of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ.
- Understand the necessity of a just government in Islam.
- Contemplate and research on how Imām ʿAlī ﷺ created a just government.
- Explain how to research sermons from *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ

Name	ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib
Kunyah	Abūl Ḥasan, Abūl Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb
Title	Amīrul Muʾminīn
Parents	Abū Ṭālib and Fāṭimah bint Asad
Date of Birth	13th Rajab 22 BH (600 AD), 30 ʿĀmul-Fīl
Birthplace	Inside of the Kaʿbah in Mecca, Arabia
Ring Inscription	المُلْكُ لِلّٰهِ الوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّار - The Kingdom belongs exclusively to Allah, the One, the Prevailing
Number of Children	27
Duration of Imāmah	30 Years
Date of Martyrdom	21st of the month of Ramaḍān, 40 AH (661 AD)
Place of Martyrdom	Masjid al-Kūfah, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Struck by Ibn Muljim while offering *Fajr* prayers
Lifespan	63 Years
Location of Shrine	Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ



It is truly a great tragedy that the Muslim nation *(ummah)* did not recognize or respect Imām ʿAlī ﷺ; nor did they take advantage of his vast knowledge to gain proximity to Allah ﷻ or become better human beings.

Many times in his life, the Imām ﷺ would tell the people:

سَلُونِي سَلُونِي قَبْلَ أَنْ تَفْقَدُونِي

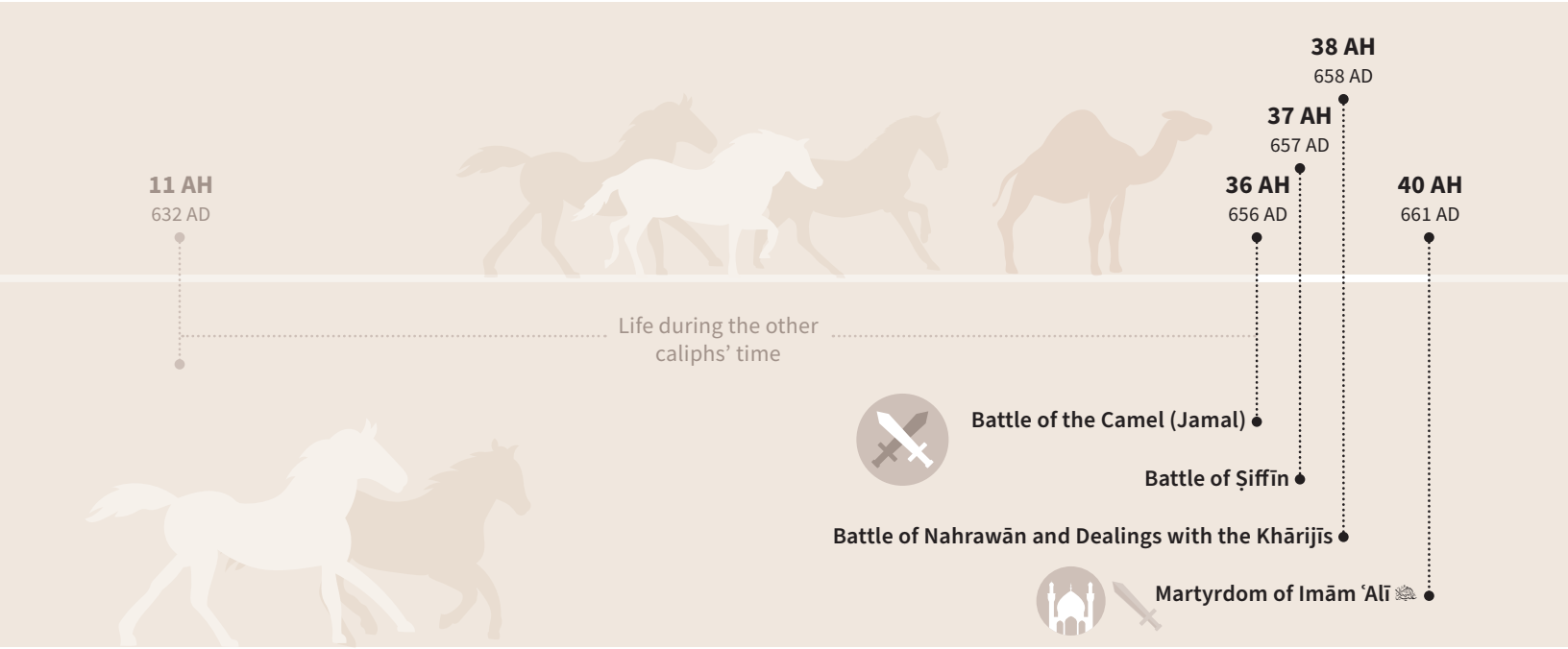
"Ask me! Ask me before you lose me!" [1]

The people did not realize the great treasure that they had in front of them. Our beloved Imām ﷺ tried to establish a proper Islamic government, but people resisted this because they were thirsty for power and prominence. There were three civil wars that were fought amongst the Muslims during the short period of four years and nine months of Imām ʿAlī's caliphate from 36 AH to 40 AH.

STOP AND REFLECT: If you could be in the Imām's presence, what would you ask him?

Shrine of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ in Najaf, Iraq

1 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 15, P. 128.



THE BATTLE OF JAMAL

NĀKITHĪN:
the oath breakers

The first war, the Battle of Jamal, was against the *nākithīn*[2]—the oath breakers—and took place near Baṣrah in 36 AH. Once Imām ʿAlī ﷺ assumed the role of the caliphate, he ruled with complete justice. When it came to assigning his governors, he only picked those who would rule with justice. With the previous caliphs, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr had accumulated a lot of wealth, and were hoping for the Imām ﷺ to give them a position within his government. However, he did not assign them any positions—because he knew them well enough—thus, he assigned others instead.

Ṭalḥah and Zubayr then returned to Mecca where they ran into the Prophet's wife, ʿĀ'ishah, who had a lot of animosity toward Imām ʿAlī ﷺ [due to his great status and position with Allah ﷻ and the Noble Messenger ﷺ]. They all wanted to seek revenge against the Imām ﷺ for their own personal, unjustified reasons. Using the death of ʿUthmān as an excuse, ʿĀ'ishah, Ṭalḥah, and Zubayr led others in a movement against those whom they accused of murdering ʿUthmān.[3] This was despite the fact that they knew very well that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had absolutely no role in his killing. In fact, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ even stated that it was Ṭalḥah and Zubayr who were the ones to blame for ʿUthmān's murder.[4]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Imām Alī ﷺ did not appoint Ṭalḥah and Zubayr as governors?

The Battle of Jamal ended fairly quickly—the Imām ﷺ managed to defeat the opponents' army within a day. Many parts of Baṣrah were destroyed, and thousands of Muslims were killed, including Ṭalḥah. A notable event in the battle was that after a reminder from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, Zubayr decided to retreat; however, he was killed as he exited the battlefield.

Additionally, once the battle was over, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ loudly declared that this war was similar to how a mother and son have a disagreement. He cleared ʿĀ'ishah's name, and declared that he did not hold anything against her. He then sent her home to Mecca in a very respectful manner with her brother, Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr—who was on the side of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ.

2 Ibn Abīl Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 1, P. 201.
3 Balādhurī, Aḥmad, *Jamāl min Ansāb al-Ashrāf,* Vol. 2, P. 159.
4 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon# 22.

THE BATTLE OF ṢIFFĪN

The second civil war that occurred during the caliphate of Imām ʿAlī 🕊 was the Battle of Ṣiffīn. This war was fought against the *qāsiṭīn*—the opposers. When ʿUthmān was the caliph, he had appointed Muʿāwiyah as the governor of Syria. However, as we mentioned earlier, Imām ʿAlī 🕊 only wanted just individuals to be in positions of leadership. Thus, he ordered for Muʿāwiyah to be removed as the governor of Syria. Muʿāwiyah, however, refused to follow this order. Furthermore, he turned all of the people in Syria against Imām ʿAlī 🕊 by spreading propaganda and false rumors about the Imām 🕊. This ultimately led to a battle between Imām ʿAlī 🕊 and Muʿāwiyah. Imām ʿAlī 🕊 tried to settle the issue peacefully by sending representatives to sign a treaty; but Muʿāwiyah insisted on fighting.[5]

QĀSIṬĪN:
the opposers

The Battle of Ṣiffīn was a long battle that lasted over 100 days, and led to the death of more than 6,000 Muslims. The majority of the slain were companions of the Prophet ﷺ, including one of the greatest ones—ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir. After many days, Imām ʿAlī's army was on the brink of success as one of his best commanders, Mālik al-Ashtar, was about to close in on Muʿāwiyah. Muʿāwiyah, realizing that they would soon be defeated, decided to employ a tricky tactic and evil scheme. He instructed his soldiers to put Qurʾāns on spears as a sign of peace and truce.

Seeing this, the Muslims turned to Imām ʿAlī 🕊 and asked him if they should withdraw. Imām ʿAlī 🕊 informed his army that this was merely a trick by Muʿāwiyah, and that they should proceed with the attack; however, they refused to follow the orders of the Imām 🕊 and even threatened to kill him! As a result, the Imām 🕊 had no choice but to call Mālik back to him and stop him from attacking Muʿāwiyah. Thereafter, Imām ʿAlī 🕊 ended up having to sign a treaty with Muʿāwiyah. This was very unfortunate, for if the people had listened to the Imām 🕊 and followed his orders, then Muʿāwiyah would have been finished once and for all.

On several occasions, Imām ʿAlī 🕊 would point out how painful this tragedy was, and how it was the most devastating war for Islam and the Muslims.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

How did Muʿāwiyah not leaving his position in Syria lead to a 'safe haven' for those who disagreed with Imām ʿAlī's policy of creating a just government? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

5 *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah,* Vol. 3, P. 89.

THE BATTLE OF NAHRAWĀN

The final civil war that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was forced to participate in was the Battle of Nahrawān. This battle was against the *māriqīn*—the rebellious ones. These were the same people who forced Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to make a peace treaty with Muʿāwiyah, but then became regretful about their decision. They realized just how evil Muʿāwiyah was, so they asked the Imām ﷺ to break his promise. However, as we already know, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was loyal to his word—even against a tyrant—so he did not agree to this. In retaliation, these people denounced Imām ʿAlī ﷺ as the caliph. They soon became known as the *khawārij*—those who exited (the right path). As a result of their dissent, the Battle of Nahrawān ensued, and the *khawārij* suffered a major defeat.[6]

MĀRIQĪN: the rebellious ones

KHAWĀRIJ: those who exited (the right path)

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about how the *khawārij* treated Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. They spoke about being regretful, but then turned against the Imām ﷺ again and fought him. Do you think there will be people like this during the time of the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ?

IMĀM ʿALĪ'S LIFE

Despite all the obstacles that hurled in his path, the Imām ﷺ still managed to help the nation during his caliphate. The center of his government was in the city of Kūfah. Before he established his government there, this city was practically barren with a very small population. However, as governor, he redeveloped the entire city and its infrastructure. Upon his commands, sewages, water wells, and agricultural systems were all established.

Additionally, people previously used to build houses wherever they desired. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ however, created a proper street system and grid, where houses were built in a more organized manner. Thanks to his foresight and infrastructural developments, he turned Kūfah into a model city whose population soon grew to more than 300,000.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ spread true knowledge through educating people—both young and old. Those who could teach others did not have to pay taxes which encouraged more learning. The Imām ﷺ would kiss the hands of the elderly when they came to learn. Poverty was also eliminated during the time of Imām ʿAlī's rulership.

Furthermore, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ established how to run a proper government that was based on morals and justice. This can be seen through his famous letter to his governor, Mālik al-Ashtar, which can be found in *Nahj al-Balāghah,* as well as other books.[7] As governor, he also encouraged others to give charity beyond the obligatory *zakāh* and *khums*, and in all of the advices which he gave to others, the Imām ﷺ himself led by example.

6 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol. 5, P. 43. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

7 This exceptional letter and piece of advice from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to Mālik al-Ashtar can be found at: https://www.al-islam.org/richest-treasure-imam-ali/imam-alis-letter-malik-al-ashtar-richest-treasure

One of the most important aims of Islam was to prevent the strong people from oppressing the weak ones, and to put an end to exploitation in all its forms. The Noble Prophet ﷺ accomplished this goal, but after his death, injustice again took hold of society. When Imām ʿAlī ؑ became the caliph, he first dismissed all of the governors who had been appointed by ʿUthmān. On being asked and questioned about such a decision, he replied:

"O Muslims! Do you wish that I should make an alliance with cruelty, tyranny, treachery, and deceit? Do you want me to become an accomplice in the exploitation of the nation (ummah) of Muḥammad? By Allah, I will never do so as long as the heavenly orbs are pulling each other. I will take the rights of the weak from the hands of the usurper, and restore it to them." [8]

Imām ʿAlī's policies were different from the rulers before him. He made a system that completely removed the caste system that the Arabs had. His every thought, word, and deed were based on God-consciousness *(taqwā)*.

His whole existence revolved around the question:
"What shall I think, say, or do that will please my Creator?"

He created a government based on complete justice—such that not one person got a share less or more than what they deserved regardless of who they were.

TAQWĀ:
God-consciousness

STOP AND REFLECT: How is the caliphate of Imām ʿAlī ؑ related to the return of our 12th Imām ؑ?

END OF IMĀM ʿALĪ'S LIFE

On the night of the 19th of the month of Ramaḍan, 40 AH, Imām ʿAlī ؑ headed toward *Masjid al-Kūfah* to pray *Ṣalātul Layl*, then lead the *Fajr* prayers. While he was in the state of prostration *(sujūd)*, he was struck by the poisonous sword of Ibn Muljim. Two nights later, on the 21st night, our Imām ؑ left this transient world. He also left behind the poor, needy, and orphans, who wondered on this night why they had not received their bread, like they did every other night. They did not know or realize that the one who secretly delivered them food all of the time had been martyred and was no longer in this world.

He was born in the best of places (inside the Kaʿbah) on the best of days (13th of Rajab which is during the ayyāmul bayḍ—the full moon nights); and left in the best of months (month of Ramaḍan) in the best of ways (while in the state of prostration).

8 *Ali's Internal and External Policy*. Retrieved on April 11, 2022 from: https://www.al-islam.org/restatement-history-islam-and-muslims-sayyid-ali-asghar-razwy/alis-internal-and-external-policy

NAHJ AL-BALĀGHAH

Nahj al-Balāghah—The Peak of Eloquence—is a Book of Sermons, Letters, and Sayings of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ which was compiled by Sayyid Sharīf ar-Raḍī, a renowned scholar from the 10th century. It consists of over 200 Sermons and 80 Letters of our beloved first Imām ﷺ.

The following passage is from Imām 'Alī's famous sermon called *Khutbah ash-Shaqshaqiyyah,* in which he comments about the previous caliphs, and how his right was taken away from him for all of those years. It was delivered after the masses of people "begged" him to become the caliph after the assassination of ʿUthmān.

> *At that moment, nothing took me by surprise, and the crowd of people rushed toward me. It advanced toward me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were getting crushed, and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They collected around me like a herd of sheep and goats. But then, when I took up the reins of government: one party broke away, and another turned disobedient, while the rest began acting wrongfully as if they had not heard the words of Allah in which He said:*
>
> *'That abode in the hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor (to make) mischief (therein); and the (best) outcome is for the righteous ones.'*[9]
>
> *Yes, by Allah, they had heard it and understood it, but the world appeared glittering in their eyes and its embellishments seduced them. Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me, and supporters had not exhausted the argument, and if there had not been a pledge with Allah with the learned ones to the effect that they should not consent to the gluttony of the oppressors, and the hunger of the oppressed, then I would have cast the rope of caliphate on its own shoulders, and would have given the last one the same treatment as the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view, this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat.* [10]

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

In a group, reread this sermon from *Nahj al-Balāghah*. What reasons does Imām ʿAlī ﷺ give for accepting the peoples' requests to become the caliph? Why does Imām ʿAlī ﷺ say that *"in my view, this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat?"* What does this have to do with the caliphate? Discuss amongst your group, and be prepared to present your answers to the class.

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 83.

10 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon #3.

Activity 2.1a: Review Questions

1. Why did Imām ʿAlī ﷺ refer to the Battle of Ṣiffīn as the most tragic battle for the Muslims and Islam?

2. Using the information you have on the history of these three battles, what do you understand about the justice of the governance of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ?

3. What do you think are some elements that would make a just government?

Activity 2.1a: Review Questions

4. Fill in the following chart for each of the battles during the time of the caliphate of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, and his response to the people.

NAME OF BATTLE	REASON FOR BATTLE	OUTCOME	IMĀM'S RESPONSE

Activity 2.1b: Case Study
Imām ʿAlī ﷺ: Ruler and Statesman

Read pages 260-273 in *Nahj al-Balāghah* under the topic of: *Imām ʿAlī ﷺ: Ruler and Statesman*. Write an essay showing how Imām ʿAlī ﷺ implemented a just government, and the implications of such a government.

Use concrete examples from the text indicated and properly cite the sources. Be sure to consult the below rubric.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Properly cited examples from *Nahj al-Balāghah*	No citing or examples were used.	Some sources were used, but not properly cited.	1-2 examples were used, and they were properly cited.	3 or more examples were used and they were properly cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Quality	Essay was not convincing, or it was missing criteria.	Essay was somewhat convincing, but lacked main concepts.	Essay was convincing, and met almost all of the necessary criteria.	Essay was convincing, and contained all of the necessary criteria.

2.2 Last Will of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

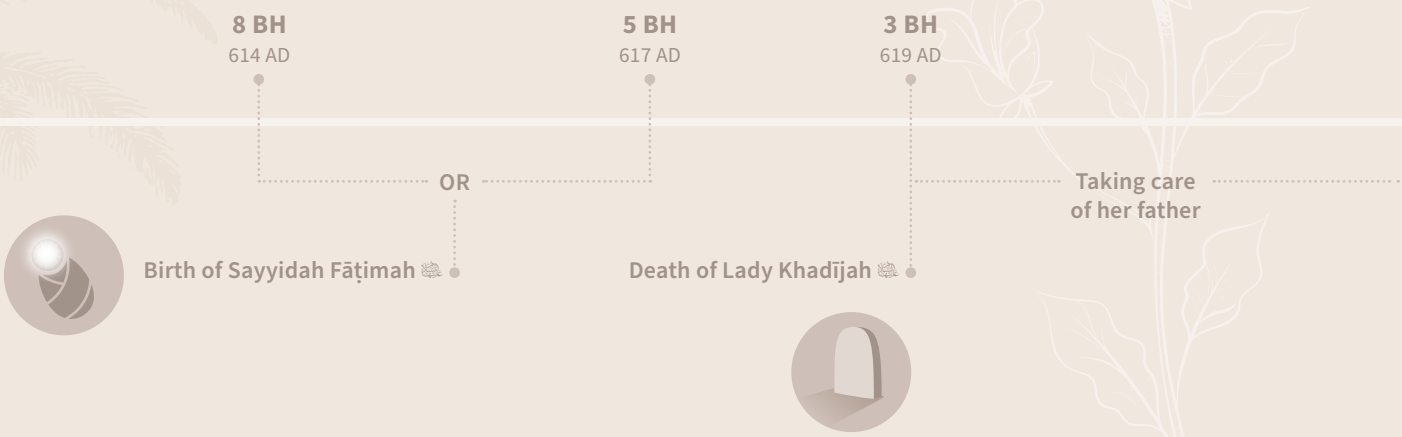
WE WILL:

- Demonstrate how Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ continued teaching Islam, and the leadership *(Wilāyah)* of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ through her tears and propagation after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Analyze parts of the will of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ.
- Understand the final moments of the life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, and how it affected those around her.

AN OVERVIEW OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ

Name	Fāṭimah ﷺ bint Muḥammad ﷺ
Kunyah	Umm Abīhā (Mother of her father); Ummul Aʾimmah (Mother of the 11 Imāms)
Title	Az-Zahrāʾ (the radiant one, or a flower); Al-Batūl (the Pure One)
Parents	Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and Lady Khadījah bint Khuwaylid ﷺ
Date of Birth	20th Jumādā al-Ākhirah 5 or 8 BH
Birthplace	Mecca, Arabia
Number of Children	5 (3 sons and 2 daughters)
Date of Martyrdom	13th Jumādā al-Ūlā 11 AH, or 3rd Jumādā al-Ākhirah 11 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Struck by a burning door and inflicted with other injuries such as broken ribs
Lifespan	18 Years
Location of Grave	Medina (exact location is unknown), Arabia

TIMELINE OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ



Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ is one of the best role models for all of humankind. After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, she went through many difficulties. People rejected Imām ʿAlī (ʿa)—her husband and Imām of the time; they physically abused her; took away her rights; etc. She lived a very short life of around 18 years, then faced martyrdom, and left her husband and young children to join her father in the next world.

The death of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was very difficult for those who were close to him, especially his family. Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and Imām ʿAlī ﷺ were with him until his final moments in this world, but many of the others were conspiring to seek power for themselves after his demise.

STOP AND REFLECT: Explain the need for a Divinely-appointed leader on Earth at all times. Why can there not be a democratic vote to appoint a caliph?

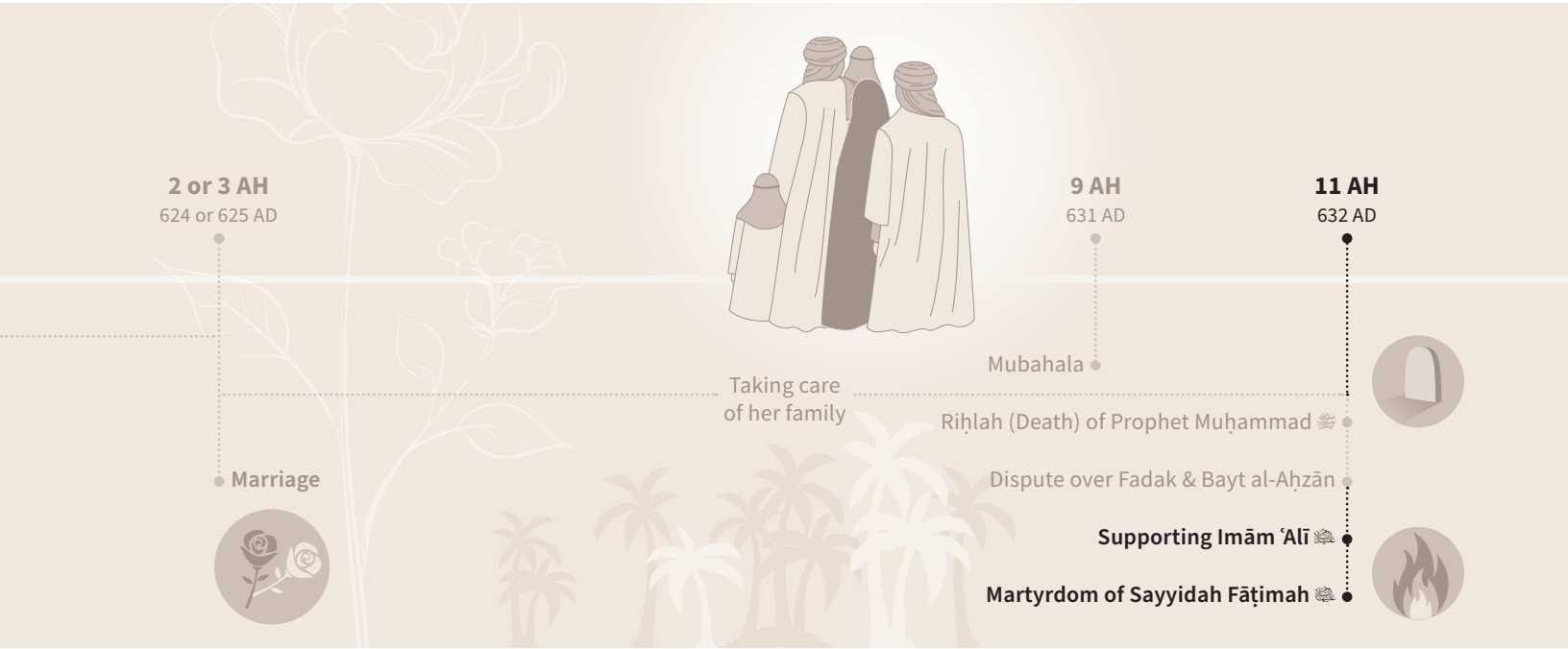
The people all knew that the Divine guide after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, as he had announced this on so many different occasions (and we learned this in previous lessons and grades). The *Wilāyah* (guardianship) of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was meant to be for all Muslims—the same way that the *Wilāyah* of the Prophet ﷺ was for all Muslims. This was because he was *maʿṣūm* (immaculate and free from any sins), and made the best decisions according to the Will of Allah ﷻ in every situation.

As Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was performing the funeral rights of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, there were many men who had gathered in a secret gathering to decide who would be the successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, even though they very well knew that it was supposed to be Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. They made lame excuses for why he was not fit to lead, one being that he was too young, so they decided that Abū Bakr would be the caliph.

After the Prophet ﷺ was buried, and news spread about Abū Bakr having been selected as the new caliph, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ would leave her home—alongside her husband—and go door to door reminding people that Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) was meant

WILĀYAH: guardianship/ leadership

MAʿṢŪM: immaculate and free from any sins



to be their rightful leader and caliph, as appointed by Allah ﷻ. She knew that this is what the Almighty wanted and had commanded to be informed. Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the most perfect man on the Earth at that time. He was the **only** person who could lead people with justice and mercy—that is why he was chosen by Allah ﷻ to lead the Muslims.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss how the tears of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ helped in proving and verifying the *Wilāyah* (guardianship) of Imām ʿAlī ؑ after the death of the final Messenger ﷺ? Really think about this question and previous lessons, and the timeline of her life after the demise of her beloved father ﷺ. Once you have written down your answer, be prepared to discuss it with the class.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ was the first defender of *Wilāyah*. She never faltered in defending the Imām of her time and the concept of Imamate as appointed by Allah ﷻ. She was willing to unveil the truth—especially after the death of the final Prophet ﷺ—even though it cost her her own life. When she went to defend and claim back her own rights in regards to the land of Fadak, her main aim was to defend the *Wilāyah* (guardianship) of Imām ʿAlī ؑ and restore the right of his *Imāmah* back to him. We know that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ did not care about any material possessions, rather she knew the true intentions behind the oppressors taking Fadak away from her. Confiscating the land of Fadak was a tactic used to take away any source of wealth from the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, completely sidelining them in every possible way, trying to reduce their great status, and attempting to weaken Imām ʿAlī ؑ. Abū Bakr knew that if he would have accepted the truthfulness of the claim of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ to Fadak, then after that she would have fought for the rights of her husband; and the truthfulness of her claims could not have been denied, and he would have been forced to give the caliphate back to its rightful owner—Imām ʿAlī ؑ.

RECALLING THE TRAGEDY OF THE DOOR

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the tragedy of the door? How did Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ get physically hurt and by whom?

Shortly after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, some people came to the house of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ to get allegiance from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ for the caliphate of Abū Bakr. Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ knew they had come to her home to cause some trouble, such that if Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was killed, they would have conjured up stories about the nature of his death. She also knew that if Imām ʿAlī ﷺ would have used his strength against them, then too the people would have made up stories.

Since Imām ʿAlī ﷺ refused to give allegiance to Abū Bakr after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the oppressors thought they could take it by force. We can see the reality of the oppression that was inflicted upon the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ through the following *aḥādīth* that have been reported by the Ahlus Sunnah in their own books.

Abū Bakr asked ʻAlī to support him, but ʻAlī refused, then ʿUmar went toward ʿAlī's house with a burning torch.

At the door, he met Fāṭimah who said to him: "Do you intend to burn the door of my house?"

ʿUmar said: "Yes, because this act will strengthen the faith brought to us by your father." [1]

ʿUmar asked for wood, and told the people inside the house: "I swear by Allah who has my soul in His hand, that if you do not come out, I will burn the house."

Someone told ʿUmar that Fāṭimah is inside the house.

ʿUmar said: "So what! It does not matter to me who is in the house." [2]

Ultimately, the door to the house was set ablaze and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ was hit with the door, which caused her physical pain and the loss of her unborn child.

She became very angry with Abū Bakr and those who denied Imām ʿAlī ﷺ his Divinely-appointed successorship. It has been narrated in the Ahlus Sunnah books that:

> The Messenger of Allah said: 'Fāṭimah is a part of me, and he who makes her angry, makes me angry.' [3]

She kept away from those who oppressed her family, and did not talk to them until she died. Due to the oppression and physical abuse against her, she only remained alive for six months after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. When she died, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ performed all of her burial rights and funeral prayer himself, and then buried her in the darkness of the night without informing the people.

1 Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, Vol.1, Pp. 582, 586. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
2 Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Imāmah wal Siyāsah*, Vol. 1, Pp. 3,19-20. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
3 Bukhārī, Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* Vol. 5, Book 57, Ḥadīth #61. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

THE LAST WILL OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﵺ

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﵺ and Imām ʿAlī ﵇ are perfect examples and role models for us in every way possible. Let us look at the manner in which they spoke to one another in her final days. This Lady of Light ﵺ said to her beloved husband ﵇:

"Your separation is very severe upon me... This is an adversity which has no comfort..."

– Imām ʿAlī ﵇

> *"O my cousin! Throughout my entire life with you, you have never heard falsehood or (witnessed) betrayal from me, nor have I ever disobeyed you." Imām ʿAlī ﵇ replied: "No, never. You are more informed, virtuous, and honorable; and your fear of Allah is more than anyone else, (so how) could I reproach you for any disobedience? Your separation is very severe upon me, but what can one do for there is no escape from death. By Allah! You have renewed the sorrow of the (separation from the) Prophet of Allah, and your parting and bereavement is grand and hard upon me. Verily, we are Allah's, and verily unto Him we shall return, upon the calamity that is tragic and heart-rendering. This is an adversity which has no comfort, and is so serious that there is no replacement for it."* [4]

Then they wept together for sometime. ʿAlī pressed the head of Fāṭimah up to his chest and said: *"You may will whatever you desire, certainly you will find me such that I shall fulfill your desire with goodness, and endear your behest upon that of mine."* [5]

> *Sayyidah Fātimah ﵺ had a request for Imām ʿAlī ﵇: "And when I pass away from this world, do not inform anyone except Umm Salamah, Umm Ayman, and Fiḍḍa; and among the men, inform my two sons (Ḥasan and Ḥusayn), ʿAbbās (ibn ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib), Salmān, Miqdād, Abū Dharr, and Ḥuḍayfah. Bathe me with the help of the above mentioned women, and bury me at night; and do not inform anyone [of the location of my grave] so that they do not come to my grave."* [6]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why would Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﵺ not want anyone to know the whereabouts of her grave? What do you think the consequences (they could be positive) of this are today?

4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 191.
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 191.
6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 78, P. 310.

FINAL MOMENTS OF THE LIFE OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ

The treatment meted out to the beloved daughter of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ after his death is extremely painful and sad. Although Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ did not live in this world more than a few months after the death of her father, but even this short period of time had a long tale of intense grief and unbearable difficulties.

The first of these tragedies began with the arrangements of the funeral rights for the final Messenger ﷺ. This was made as a contest for power. Naturally, it must have injured Sayyidah Fāṭimah's grief-stricken heart to see that those who "claimed love and attachment" to the Noble Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime, became so engrossed in their struggle for power, that instead of consoling his only daughter, they did not even know when the Prophet ﷺ was given his funeral bath or when he was buried.

Then what happened shortly afterwards was that a group of thugs went to her house with firewood to set the place ablaze, and tried to secure allegiance from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and those present in her house by force with all the display of oppression, compulsion, and violence. All of these excesses were with the intention to try to obliterate the prestigious position that this house had in the eyes of people. With this aim in view, in order to then crush her economic position, they confiscated Fadak, and her claim to get back her rightful property was turned down by dubbing it as false. The outcome of all of this tyranny was that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ made a dying will that none of them should attend her funeral, or even be made aware of her burial place.

Thus, Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ﷺ was ready to meet her Lord. She bathed, then laid down in her garment. She instructed Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays to wait for a while, then call her name; if there was no answer, it would mean that she had departed from this world toward her Lord.

Asmāʾ waited for a bit, then called Fāṭimah's name, but there was no answer. Asmāʾ repeated the call: "O daughter of the chosen Muḥammad! O daughter of the most honorable of them whom women bore! O daughter of the best of those who have walked on land! O daughter of the one who was at a distance of two bow-lengths or nearer." [7] There was no answer.

Silence overwhelmed the house. Asmāʾ then proceeded toward Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and found that she had left this world. At that point, her young children, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ entered and asked where there mother was. Asmāʾ could not utter a word. They proceeded toward their mother. Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ turned toward his brother and said: "May Allah console you in regard to our mother!"

At that time, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was at the masjid. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ went there and broke the news to their father. As soon as he heard their words, he fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he said: "Who will console me now, O daughter of Muḥammad? You used to console me, so who will take your place now?" [8]

The Hashemite women were then gathered in order to receive the news of this great calamity. Everyone came to console Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and his young children. "Allah is with you O children of Fāṭimah. It was just yesterday that you were inflicted with the death of your great father—the Prophet of Allah, and now your new calamity is not any less than that one! But be patient, for this is the Will of the Almighty Lord." [9]

Activity 2.2a: Review

7 Referring to the Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Najm (53), Verse 9.

8 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 186.

9 Sibtayn.com. *Lady Fatima Zahra's Will to Imam Ali.* Retrieved on July 18, 2022, from https://www.sibtayn.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6505%3Alady-fatima-zahra-s-sa-will-to-imam-ali-a-s&catid=640&Itemid=269

1. Why do we say that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ was the first defender of *Wilāyah?*

2. What was the significance of certain people turning down Sayyidah Fāṭimah's claim to Fadak?

3. What are some of the possible reasons why Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ did not want anyone to know about the location of her grave except the few people whom she mentioned?

Activity 2.2b: Practical Application

Think about Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ as the first defender of *Wilāyah.*

1. What are some important qualities and characteristics that we should work on building within ourselves if we want to be true defenders of *Wilāyah?*

2. What are a few practical changes in your life you can make that will help you become a defender of *Wilāyah?*

2.3 Advice from Imām Ḥasan ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

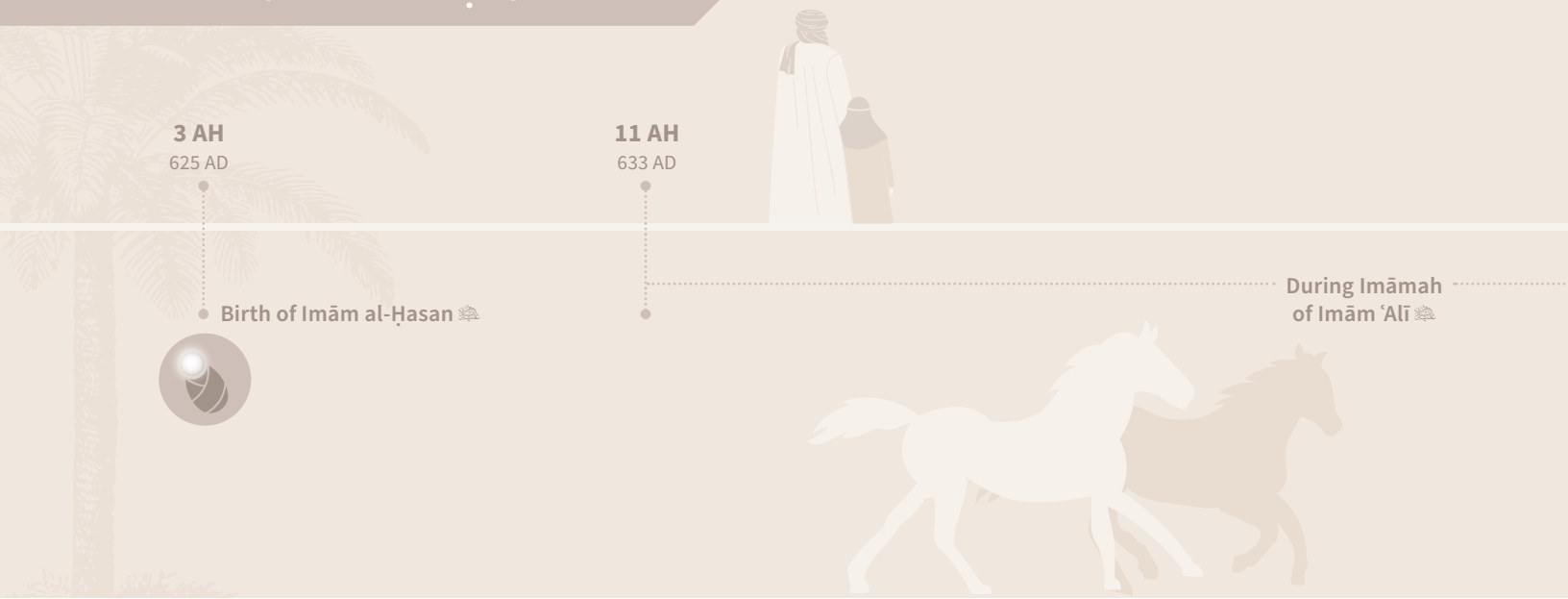
WE WILL:

- Recall the martyrdom of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.
- Analyze the advices that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ gives through his sayings and narrations.
- Demonstrate how to implement the many pieces of advice and guidance by the 2nd Imām ﷺ into our own lives.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤASAN ﷺ

Name	Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ
Kunyah	Abū Muḥammad
Title	Al-Mujtabā (The Chosen One)
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ
Date of Birth	15th of the month of Ramaḍān, 3 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imamate	10 years
Date of Martyrdom	7th or 28th of Ṣafar, 50 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned by his wife, Jaʿdah (upon the order of Muʿāwiyah)
Lifespan	47 Years
Location of Grave	Jannatul Baqī, Medina, Arabia

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤASAN ﷺ



MARTYRDOM

Imām Ḥasan 🕋 lived a life of oppression; and even after his death, the enemies did not leave him alone. As we mentioned in a previous lesson, his wife, Jaʿdah bint al-Ashʿath was bribed by Muʿāwiyah to poison the Imām 🕋. He promised her 100,000 dirhams and marriage to his own son, Yazīd. However, after she poisoned the Imām 🕋, he went back on his word.

Jaʿdah gave Imām Ḥasan 🕋 a poisonous drink. The poison in this drink was so strong that Imām Ḥasan 🕋 told Imām Ḥusayn 🕋: "I have spat out clots of blood from my liver."

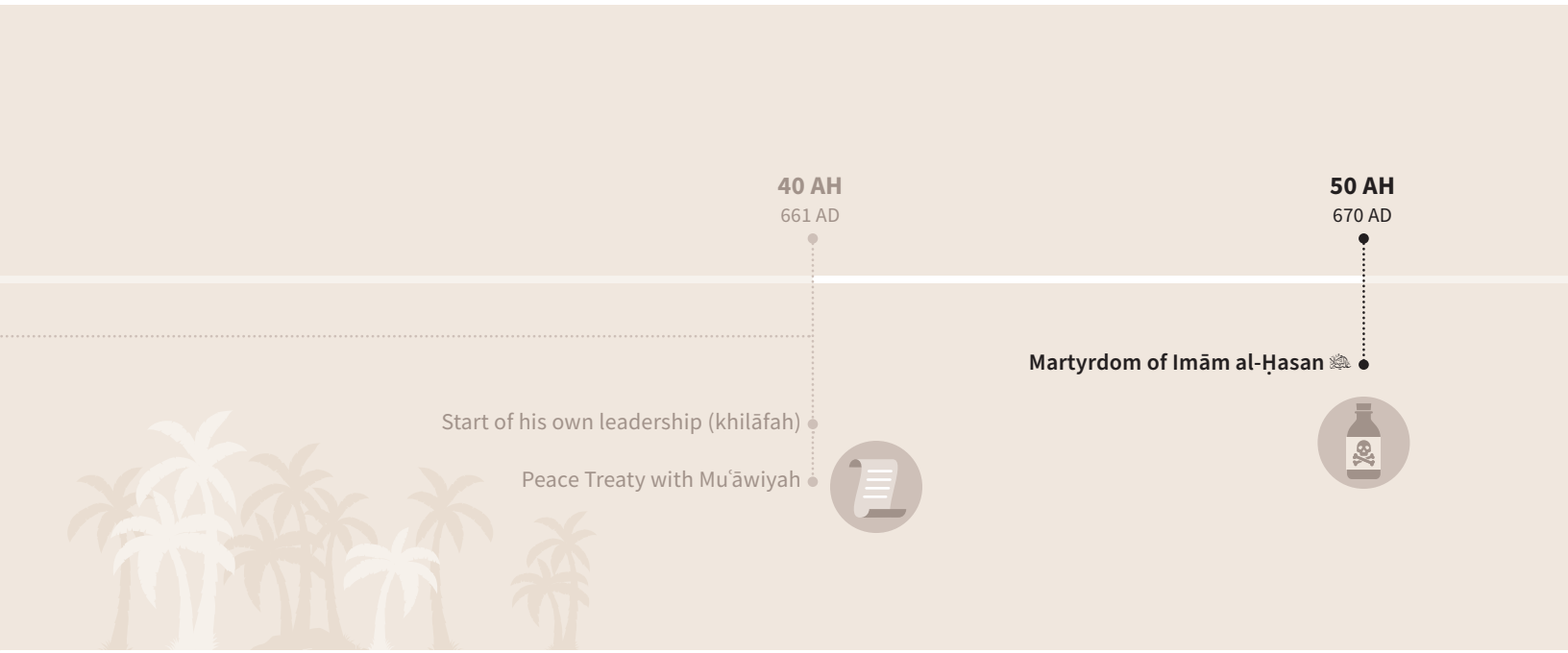
> *He then asked his brother to complete his final rites as follows: "When I die, shut my eyes, wash me, and shroud me. Then, carry me to the grave of my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, so that I may renew my pledge with him. After that, take me to the grave of my grandmother, Fāṭimah bint Asad, and bury me there."*[1]

The Imām 🕋 suffered the effects of the poison before he finally passed away in the month of Ṣafar, 50 AH, at the age of 48. Imām Ḥusayn 🕋 performed his last rites, just as he was requested. However, when they were taking the body toward the grave of the Prophet ﷺ, the Banī Umayyah thought they wanted to bury him there. They thought this would give the Imām's grave more honor, so they gathered together and armed themselves.

They shot many arrows at the dead body of Imām Ḥasan 🕋. This is how oppressed our 2nd Imām 🕋 was, that even after his death, the enemies did not cease to inflict pain upon him.

He was finally laid to rest in Jannatul Baqīʿ. Unfortunately, to this day the Imam 🕋 and those who are buried in this graveyard, such as great companions, are oppressed: Muslims are not allowed to go near his grave or pray upon it. Access to Jannatul Baqīʿ is only for a limited number of hours per day and for select people. This cemetery has been demolished more than once in history. InshāʾAllāh there will come a day when we can all freely visit and pray near the grave of our beloved Imām 🕋.

1 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād,* Vol. 2, P. 14.



STOP AND REFLECT: What if you met a new person, and without even becoming acquainted with them, they started to verbally abuse you or your parents. How would you react in such a situation?

TAKING A LESSON FROM IMĀM ḤASAN

A man—who was a traveler to the city of the Prophet—was walking in the streets of Medina, when someone told him: "That is Ḥasan, the son of ʿAlī." His heart became filled with hatred. He envied Imām ʿAlī for having a son like that. So he headed toward him and said: "Are you the son of ʿAlī?" The Imām responded: "Yes, I am his son." It was then that the man started to curse him and his father. Blatant lies in the traveler's country of origin (some historians mention that he was from Damascus) led him to view Imām ʿAlī and his family in a very negative light.

When the traveler finally finished cursing, the Imām asked him: "It seems like you are a stranger[2] here?" The man replied: "Yes, I am." The Imām then said to him: "Come over to our place! If you need a house, we will host you; if you require money, we will give it to you; if you need clothing, we will provide it for you; if you have any other need, we will assist you."

The man could not believe what he heard. After this, there was no one on the face of the Earth more beloved to him than the Imām. Every time the man used to think back to what he did and how the Imām responded, he was grateful (and indebted) to him, and felt embarrassed about how he had acted.[3]

2 Stranger here means 'new to that town.'

3 Subḥānī, Jaʿfar, *Al-Āʾimmah al-Ithnā ʿAshar*, Pp. 43-44 (with slight editing).

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How did the traveler's opinion about the Ahlul Bayt change after he met Imām Ḥasan? Discuss with a partner how our good characteristics can change a person's outlook about Islam and Allah.

This traveler's encounter with Imām Ḥasan gives us a snapshot about the forbearance, clemency, kindness, and charity of the Imām. The life of this Divinely-selected representative emanates profound wisdom, valor, and foresight.

ḤADĪTH 1: GENEROSITY

We learn through many examples—such as the one above—about the characteristics of Imām Ḥasan. We also know a great deal about his life, and the Peace Treaty that he had to sign from previous lessons in the past few years. The 2nd Imām—while dealing with an unbearable amount of oppression—continued to strive and persevere in his life, and taught people the true path to Allah. From the various narrations of Imām Ḥasan, we benefit from his immense guidance up until today.

One of the many beautiful characteristics we see in regard to this Imām is that he was a very generous person. Despite whatever someone would ask of him, he gave without hesitation. Imām Ḥasan said:

> "A good deed should be performed without hesitation, and without reminding (that person) that a favor was done."

Sometimes this can be very difficult for us, especially if we feel that someone is asking a lot from us. For example, if we only have a five dollar bill and someone asks us for money, we may feel that we do not want to give this money away at the moment. We will hesitate and may contemplate in our minds about what we really want to do. Imām Ḥasan—through his eloquent guidance—shows us that despite the favor being asked, if it is something within our power to accommodate, then we should oblige—not for the sake of others—but for the sake of Allah.

Activity 2.3a: Making Connections

1. What is another example that can be used for this *ḥadīth* above?
2. What concept of Islam does this tie into?
3. Create a digital presentation (either a powerpoint, a short video, etc.) connecting this *ḥadīth* to the basics of *Uṣūl ad-Dīn.* Use the rubric below to ensure that all of the components have been included.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easy to understand, and/or had no sources.	Some of the graphics were related to the topic, and some of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. All of the graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all of the borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met most of the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, and lacked quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

ḤADĪTH 2: COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Imām Ḥasan ﷺ said:

> "A blessing is a Divine test, therefore if you thank Allah, it will remain a blessing; but if you are ungrateful, then it will turn into Allah's wrath."[4]

We have learned about being thankful for the many blessings that Allah ﷻ showers upon us constantly. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, in his infinite wisdom, taught us through this *ḥadīth* about the importance of continually being thankful toward our Lord. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ۝

And when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you are thankful, then surely I will increase you, but if you deny (are ungrateful), then indeed My chastisement will be surely severe.'[5]

Gratitude is where a person knows that all of their blessings are from Allah ﷻ and one is content with whatever the Almighty One gives them. These blessings should not be used to sin or gain other things in illicit ways. Allah ﷻ has no need for our gratitude—and He states this many times in the Noble Qurʾān—but we need to be thankful and show our gratitude to Him for the countless blessings that He constantly gives us; this in turn will enable us to become closer to Allah ﷻ, and keep ourselves grounded while looking at the world with an Islamic perspective.

STOP AND REFLECT: Would you be able to list all of the bounties which Allah ﷻ has granted you? Would the list reach 100, 200, 1000, 1 million, or more? How many of these have we been grateful for? Is it easy to forget about all of these blessings?

We may be aware of and thankful for some of the blessings that we deal with on a daily basis; but we are often negligent about many of the other blessings, such as the blessings that come to us through inheritance, or the good people in our lives, or the thousands of calamities that have been repelled from us. We must attempt to be aware of all the blessings and try to be thankful as much as possible for these.

There are different ways we have been taught by the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ how to practically show gratitude to Allah ﷻ for our blessings; and some of these ways include:

- Saying *Alḥamdulillāh*
- Reciting prayers of thankfulness
- Keeping optional fasts to thank Him
- Giving charity and helping others
- Contentment in the heart
- Not using the blessings to commit sins or oppressing others

4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 78, P. 113.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 7.

Activity 2.3b: Advertisement

With a partner, pick two of the above ways to implement gratitude and show thankfulness to Allah ﷻ. For each gratitude chosen, think of how to practically implement this into your lives. Create an advertisement—digital or print—displaying the following information:

- The meaning of gratitude.
- Why it is important in Islam.
- How we can begin to practice this in our daily lives using the examples you chose so that we would not become negligent. Give practical examples.

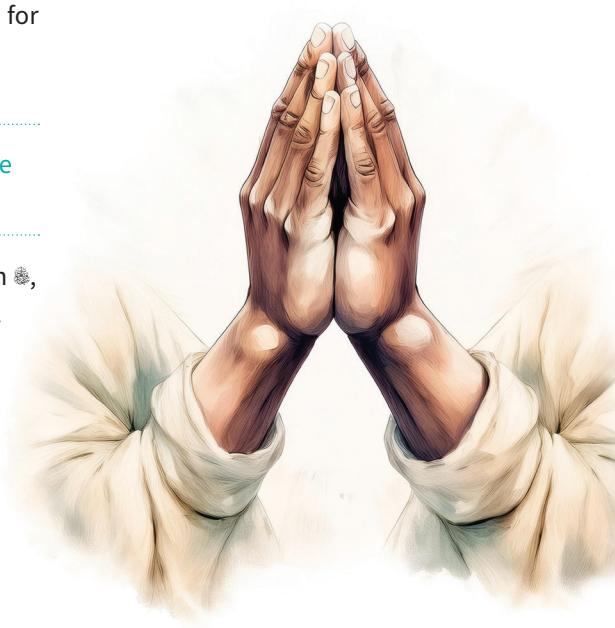
ḤADĪTH 3: FORGIVENESS

Imām Ḥasan ؑ said:

> "Do not be too quick to punish the wrongdoings and errors (of other people); always leave some time for apology between the perpetration of a mistake and its punishment." [6]

Forgiveness in Islam often refers to restraining one's anger and punishment when you are able to or have the power to administer punishment. Islam teaches human beings to always forgive those who have wronged us, especially when they come to us sincerely. Imām Ḥasan ؑ in this narration teaches us that to quickly punish someone for their wrongdoings toward us is a harsh approach. We should leave some time for the other person to correct their mistakes and wrongdoings.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to give someone time to apologize or reflect and realize their own mistake?



Sometimes, it takes a person a bit longer to realize one's mistake, repent to Allah ﷻ, and then seek the forgiveness of the one whom they wronged. There is no real timeline for repentance, but if we react in a harsh manner then we can actually do a disservice to ourselves and the person who wronged us.

Islam is a religion of balance. We cannot go to extremes on either end of the spectrum. On one hand, we cannot be too quick to become angry and punish those who mistreat us; and at the same time, we cannot always forgive people quickly and let them repeatedly take our rights.

We pray that we are able to learn from the virtues Imām Ḥasan ؑ demonstrated throughout his life, and instill these into our own lives. InshāʾAllāh, we can exhibit the same patience, generosity, and steadfastness as our beloved Imām ؑ. We also pray that we can become the true followers of the present Imām ﷺ, and recognize and fulfill our responsibilities.

6 https://english.almaaref.org/post/1033/Imam-Hassan%28as%29-s-Hadith. *Ḥadīth* #60.

Activity 2.3c: Graphic Organizer

Complete the graphic organizer below to demonstrate how we can implement the various *aḥādīth* mentioned in this lesson into our daily lives. Write the *ḥadīth,* the general meaning of it, and an example of how we can implement it into our life.

HADĪTH	MEANING	IMPLEMENTATION

Activity 2.3d: Review Questions

1. Is oppression against the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ still alive until today? If so, then in what ways can you see it in our current world?

2. What happened at the grave of the Prophet ﷺ when Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was going to bury his brother, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ?

3. Pick one *ḥadīth* mentioned by Imām Ḥasan ﷺ. Summarize the *ḥadīth*. Why is it an important concept in Islam?

4. Forgiveness in Islam often refers to restraining one's anger and punishment when you are able to or have the power to administer punishment. Think of when you have experienced this. What happened? How did you resolve the issue? What would you do differently next time such an incident occurs?

2.4 Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and the Aftermath of ʿĀshūrāʾ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about the Islamic uprisings that rose up to take revenge after the killing of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ.
- Analyze the importance of the remembrance of Karbalāʾ.
- Taking lessons from the different uprisings that took place.
- Demonstrate the contrasting differences between the various movements.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN ﷺ

Name	Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib
Kunyah	Abā ʿAbdillāh
Title	Sayyidush Shuhadāʾ (Leader of the Martyrs)
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ
Date of Birth	3rd Shaʿbān 4AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imamate	10 years
Date of Martyrdom	10th Muḥarram 61AH
Place of Martyrdom	Karbalāʾ, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Beheaded on the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ
Lifespan	57 years
Location of Shrine	Karbalāʾ, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤUSAYN ﷺ

4 AH
626 AD

Birth of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ

11 AH
634 AD

Riḥlah of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

During Imāmah of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ

We previously discussed the reasons for Imām Ḥusayn's revolution, and the importance of this great sacrifice for the sake of Allah ﷻ. In this lesson, we will discuss the aftermath of ʿĀshūrāʾ in detail, and some of the important things which transpired after Imām Ḥusayn ؑ and his companions gave their lives for the sake of Islam in Karbalāʾ.

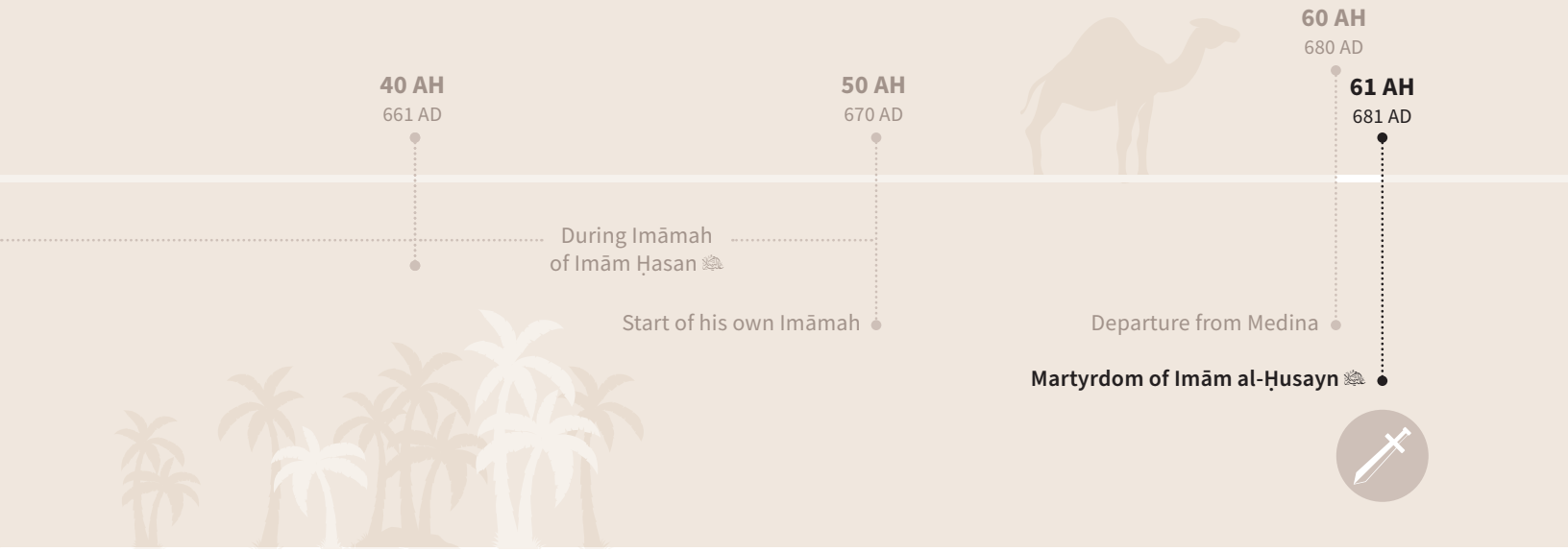
The brutal killing of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ—the grandson of the Noble Prophet ﷺ—was a great shock to the whole Muslim world. The unjust treatment of his family, who had the highest esteem and respect amongst most Muslims, compounded dissent against the Umayyads. Consequently, most of the Muslims dissociated themselves from the government's deeds and policies.

TAWWĀBĪN:
the Repentant Ones; revolted and fought against the Umayyads (65 AH)

This Divine revolution had done the task of unveiling the Umayyad's un-Islamic and unethical character to the general public, and left no doubt in any person's heart about the true nature of them. The concepts which the Umayyads were propagating in order to distort the ideals of Islam found no listening ear any longer, diverting the Umayyad's mischief of changing Islamic concepts and ideals.

Imām Ḥusayn's revolution set a living example as to the duty of Muslims in such conditions. It had deeply penetrated the hearts of certain people, and produced great pains within them for not fulfilling their Islamic duty. This feeling among those individuals transformed into repentance, then to an open revolt against the Umayyad regime. Thus, the revolution provided the stimulant to move their spirits and set it in a dynamic movement.

After that, a series of uprisings took place, all motivated by wanting to take revenge for the murder of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, and the removal of the Umayyads from power, at least within certain areas. Among these was the Uprising of the Repenters *(Tawwābīn)*; and the more successful revolution and takeover of power in Kūfah by Mukhtār ath-Thaqafī. Mukhtār was successful in executing pretty much all of the major criminals who took part in the massacre at Karbalāʾ. There was also the uprising of Zayd ibn ʿAlī, as well as others.



Eventually, years later, the Umayyad regime was finally destroyed by these revolutions. Even the takeover of power by the ʿAbbāsids—whose intentions were impure—was under the banner of taking revenge for Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, even though they only used this as an excuse to mobilize people.

The secret key of the blessed revolution of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was in his firm faith in Allah ﷻ, and his willingness to sacrifice **everything** for the sake of his Beloved. These ideals were demonstrated by the 3rd Imām ﷺ when the Muslims were in dire need of such an example. The time of Yazīd's rule was different to the rule of those before him because he was an open sinner whose position as a ruler threatened the very foundations of Islam. During the time of the two previous Imāms ﷺ, although the rulers were corrupt, however, "openly they pretended to follow" the teachings of Islam.

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ wanted to awaken the spirits of the Muslims; and get people to be in conformity with the Islamic laws and ideals, and establish some level of justice.

THE VARIOUS UPRISINGS

After learning about the atrocities of the events which transpired in Karbalāʾ; and hearing the speeches of Lady Zaynab and Imām Sajjad ﷺ; and seeing the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in captivity, the people began to see the corrupt nature of the Umayyad regime and started to oppose it. The courage of people to oppose the tyrant leaders and sacrifice their lives for the sake of the truth increased. Each of the uprisings against the Umayyad leadership held the banner of

THE BATTLE OF ḤARRAH

When the people of Medina—under the command of ʿAbdullāh ibn Ḥanẓala—heard about the news of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and his companions, the governor of the time—who was Yazīd's cousin—sent a group of elites to meet with Yazīd, after previously telling him that they will be coming, so he should treat them well. Upon hearing about the news of Karbalāʾ, ʿAbdullāh ibn Ḥanẓala wanted to see with his own eyes what Yazīd was like, so in the year 63 AH, he traveled to Syria with a group of people. When they returned to Medina, he reported:

> *By Allah, I was in Damascus and saw the lifestyle of Yazīd. I was scared that stones would fall on us from the heavens (i.e. as a punishment). He sits in the position of the Prophet and says that he is a successor of the Prophet, while he sleeps with his mothers, daughters, and sisters; and drinks wine (intoxicates himself); and pays no heed to prayers.*

After this, they began to revolt. Unfortunately, this plan backfired due to how corrupt Yazīd was, and how openly he sinned without any hesitation. Once Yazīd's tyranny was seen by them in person, the people of Medina mobilized an army against ʿUthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū Sufyān, the governor of Medina, and sent him into exile.

When Yazīd heard about this, he sent 5,000 men under the command of his most vicious officer, Muslim ibn ʿAqabah, to suppress the revolt. They met the people of Medina in a place called Ḥarrah (just outside of Medina), and a brutal battle took place between both parties—a battle in which many of the people of Medina were killed. This happened in the year 63 AH. Furthermore, Yazīd gave permission to his troops to enjoy their freedom in Medina for three days, so the troops plundered all they could find, sexually assaulted the women, polluted the Prophet's Masjid, and killed 80 companions of the Prophet ﷺ.[1]

1 Dhahabī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, P. 30; Samhudī, ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdulllāh, *Wafāʾ al-Wafā bi Akhbār dar al-Muṣṭafā*, Vol. 1, P. 126; Ibn Qutaybah, Muslim, *Al-Imāmah was Sīyāsah*, Vol. 1, P. 185.

MOVEMENT OF THE TAWWĀBĪN

This was an uprising against the Umayyads by the *Tawwābīn* (the Repentant Ones), in the year 65 AH. These were Kūfans who regretted their betrayal of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ after having invited him to Kūfah. They believed that the only way to cleanse themselves of the sin of leaving the Imām ﷺ was to give their lives in avenging his blood. The Repentant Ones—who were estimated to be about 4,000 men—gathered and fought the army of ʿUbaydullāh ibn Ziyād in an area outside of Kūfah called ʿAynul Ward.

The army fought courageously, but tragically most of them were killed by the 30,000 troops of Ibn Ziyād.

THE UPRISING OF MUKHTĀR

Mukhtār ath-Thaqafī was a devoted companion of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ who was jailed in the year 60 AH when Muslim ibn ʿAqīl first came to Kūfah because he hosted Muslim in his house (remember ʿĀshūrāʾ occurred in 61 AH). He was released from prison in the year 66 AH, after which he immediately began to make plans to take revenge on the criminals who took part in the massacre of Karbalāʾ. The perpetrators were not that hard to find as they had all been publicly boasting about the crimes they committed in Karbalāʾ—ever since the tragedy occurred in 61 AH until then—5 years later.

Mukhtār and his men seized well-known criminals, such as Shimr ibn Dhil Jawshan, Ḥarmalā, ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, and ʿUbaydullāh ibn Ziyād, and executed them one by one. They also killed many of the other men who played any role in, or attacked the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in Karbalāʾ. The revolution of Mukhtār against the murderers and criminals of Karbalāʾ—although not directly endorsed by the Imāms of that time—did lead to their satisfaction that the tyrants of Karbalāʾ had been captured, punished, and eventually killed.

The revolution led by Mukhtār was a successful movement in comparison to all of the other uprisings—although the other movements did contribute to some extent, and were important in order to expose the evils of the Umayyads and awaken the Muslims.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss the following: How do you think these uprisings affected the power of Yazīd and the Umayyads? Did they contribute to their eventual downfall? How were they a result of what happened in Karbalāʾ? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING THE IMĀM ؑ?

A common objection posed by some people who criticize the commemoration of the Event of ʿĀshūrāʾ by the Shīʿah is that it was the Shīʿah themselves who killed Imām Ḥusayn ؑ in Karbalāʾ. The people who make this claim point to historical evidence that many or most of the people who fought in the army of Yazīd were from Kūfah, and since Kūfah was a center for the Shīʿah, then it is the Shīʿah who killed Imām Ḥusayn ؑ.

This claim is completely false. The people of Kūfah consisted of many different groups. One group were the true Shīʿahs of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, who believed in the immaculateness *(ʿiṣmah)* of the Imāms ؑ. These were people such as Hānī ibn ʿUrwa, Mukhtār ath-Thaqafī, Habib ibn Maẓāhir, Muslim ibn Awsajah, etc. These people were either killed prior to ʿĀshūrāʾ, imprisoned, or reached Karbalāʾ with great difficulty and supported Imām Ḥusayn ؑ until their own martyrdom alongside the Imām ؑ.

Another group were the Lovers of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, but they did not believe in the immaculateness *(ʿiṣmah)* of the Imāms, such as Sulaymān ibn Sorād, Musayyab ibn Najabah, etc. These people preferred the Ahlul Bayt ؑ over the Umayyad caliphs, hence they wrote invitation letters to Imām Ḥusayn ؑ. However, when Hānī and Muslim were brutally killed, they were intimidated and abandoned the Imām ؑ, though they never fought against the Imām ؑ either. They regretted their actions later on and waged the Uprising of the Repenters *(Thawrah at-Tawwābīn).* They were the same people who decided to join the army of Imām ʿAlī ؑ and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ **only** if they agreed with their decisions. For example, Sulaymān ibn Sorād abandoned Imām ʿAlī ؑ during the Battle of Camel, and opposed Imām Ḥasan ؑ when he signed a peace treaty with Muʿāwiyah!

A third group were the *Umawis* (followers of the Umayyads) such as ʻAmr ibn Ḥajjāj, ʻAmr ibn Ḥuraith, ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, etc. They, along with their soldiers, were among the main perpetrators of the massacre in Karbalāʾ. It is interesting to note though that they too, in an act of hypocrisy, signed the invitation letters to Imām Ḥusayn ؑ!

There were also the *Khawārij* (those who exited the community) such as Shaʻbath ibn Rabī, Ḥajjar ibn Abjar, etc. They too were among the perpetrators of the tragedy of Karbalāʾ.

Finally, there were laymen who just jumped on the bandwagon. They were people of this lowly world whose motivation was their personal gain. They signed the invitation letters when things were promising for Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, but when faced with Ibn Ziyād's threats and bribery, they turned on their heels and abandoned the Imām ؑ.

It is these three latter groups who—under the command of Yazīd and ʿUbaydullāh ibn Ziyād—perpetrated the tragedy of Karbalāʾ, not the Shīʿah of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ.[2]

IMPORTANCE OF REVOLUTIONS

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think are important aspects of an Islamic Revolution? What defines success in an Islamic Revolution compared to other revolutions? Why was Imām Ḥusayn's revolution so successful despite all of them being killed?

The achievements of the revolution of Karbalāʾ are multidimensional and everlasting. Imām Ḥusayn ؑ knew that militarily or physically, he would not be 'victorious.' However, he still fought against the enemies. He showed the people that there are two paths in life: one is right, and the other is wrong. We need to always be aware and choose the right path in order to be successful, even though we have to sacrifice along the way. Imām al-Hādī ؑ says the following in regard to Imām Ḥusayn ؑ:

> "He gave the blood of his heart to rescue the servants of Allah from the ocean of ignorance, and the perplexity of going astray."[3]

The sacrifice of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, his family, and companions in Karbalāʾ caused a shock-wave that hit the conscience of the Muslims, sparked their faith, gave them courage to revolt against tyrannical rulers, and encouraged them to partake in enjoining good and forbidding evil. By removing those leaders which lead people to corruption, loss of faith, and greed for worldly matters, justice will prevail in the society.

2 This part was summarized from an article by Shaykh Mansour Leghaei. The full text of this answer can be found at this link...http://www.askthesheikh.com/are-the-shias-responsible-for-killing-imam-husain/

3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Zād al-Maʿād*, Vol. 1, P. 531; ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 98, P. 331.

Activity 2.4a: The Islamic Revolution

With a partner, research the Islamic Revolution of Iran which took place in 1979. What components of this revolution mirror that of Karbalāʾ? Create a digital presentation outlining the importance of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and how it took lessons from Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ.

Use the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the components.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most of the graphics related to the topic, and most of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. All graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Presentation was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	Presentation was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The presentation was not convincing or compelling.	The presentation was somewhat convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function as a presentation.	The presentation was extremely compelling and convincing.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE DISTORTIONS OF KARBALĀʾ

THINK ALOUD: Why is it important to discover the reality and the truth of the stories we hear about Karbalāʾ?

As we can see, there are many lessons which we can derive from Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and the Event of Karbalāʾ. The sacrifices which were offered for the sake of Allah ﷻ gave courage to the Muslims. On the other hand, because it was such a tragic event, relating the story of Karbalāʾ became a reason to arouse people's emotions. Those who were eloquent in writing began to fabricate dramas with little truth, based only very loosely on the story of Karbalāʾ. They would make alterations and distortions to the story in order to provoke people's emotions. This was tragic in itself as it changed the purpose of Imām Ḥusayn's martyrdom into one that would merely make people cry. These distortions occurred mostly between the 6th and 13th Century AH.

ANOTHER REVOLUTION FOR THE TRUTH!

In the year 1319 AH, a scholar by the name of Mirza Ḥusayn Nūrī (more commonly known as Muḥaddith Nūrī') began to academically criticize books that were filled with distortions about Karbalāʾ. He began a revolution against the scholars who endorsed and recited such fabricated stories. He put forth two criterias for the reciters of the *majālis* of Karbalāʾ:

1. The majlis is recited with sincerity for the sake of Allah ﷻ only.
2. Whatever is recited must only be the truth without any fabrications or distortions (whether it makes people cry or not).

One of Muḥaddith Nūrī's students, Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummī—who is the compiler of the monumental book, *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān*—later compiled a book about Karbalāʾ, known as *Nafas al-Mahmūm*.[4] This book is generally trustworthy because the author was very careful in selecting reliable narrations, and avoided most of the fabricated stories.

This was the beginning of enforcing people to seek the pure untainted truth, and practice according to the true lessons that Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ established by his sacrifices. In turn, it is our duty to seek the truth in the history of Karbalāʾ so that we can derive the true lessons from it, and practice Islam correctly.

4 This book can be found at: https://www.al-islam.org/nafasul-mahmum-relating-heart-rending-tragedy-karbala-shaykh-abbas-qummi

Activity 2.4b: Review Questions

1. Why should certain criteria be laid down for those who recite the majālis of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ?

2. Pick one of the uprisings that occurred in the aftermath of Karbalāʾ and explain it in your own words.

3. Why is it important to make sure that the traditions which are told in the majālis of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ are accurate and authentic?

4. What was the philosophy or thinking behind the different revolutions?

2.5 Imām ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Hādī ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

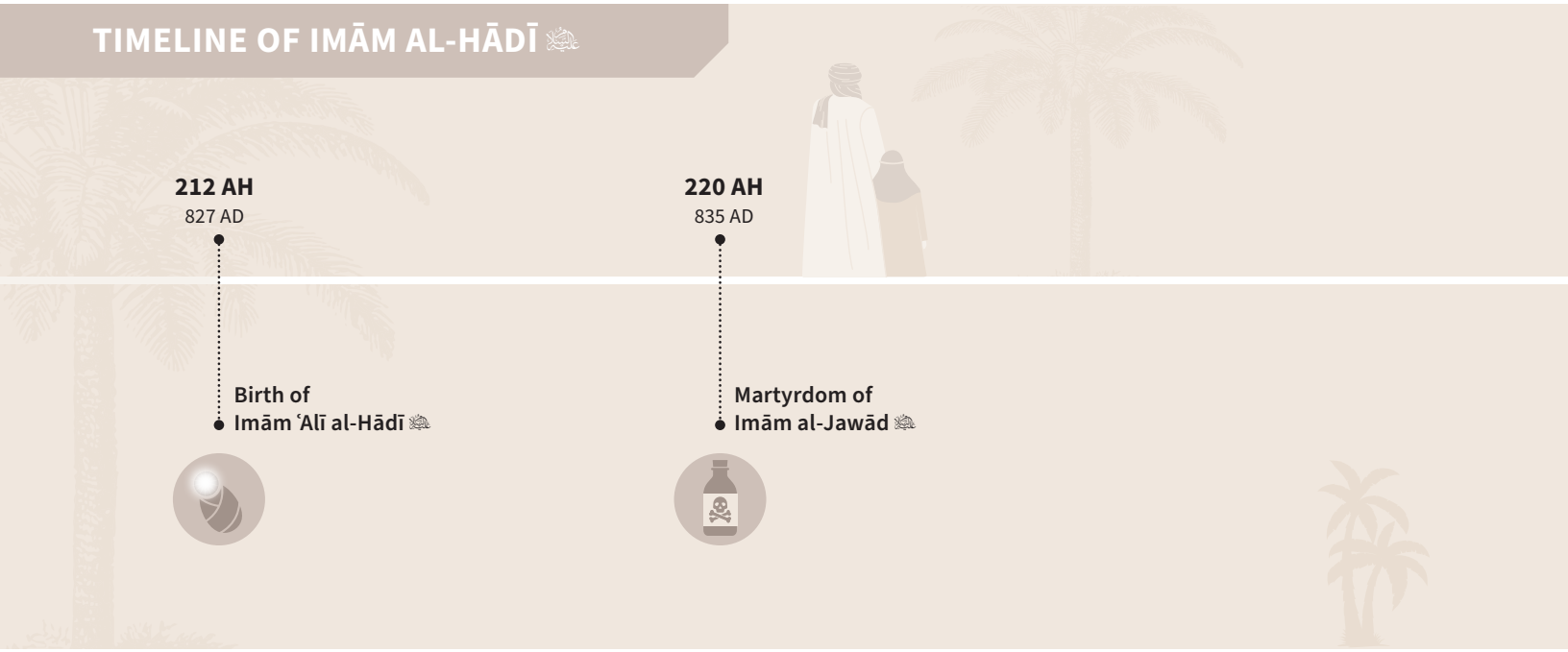
WE WILL:

- Analyze the political situation of Imām al-Hādī ﷺ and the situation of the Shīʿah during that time.
- Demonstrate the importance of earning money in a permissible way.
- Through Imām al-Hādī ﷺ, understand why Muslims cannot work for unjust people, and how to implement this into our lives today.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ʿALĪ AL-HĀDĪ ﷺ

Name	ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ﷺ
Kunyah	Abūl Ḥasan
Title	al-Hādī (the Guide), an-Naqī (the Pure One)
Parents	Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Jawād ﷺ and Sumānah
Date of Birth	15th Dhul Ḥijjah 212 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Date of Martyrdom	3rd Rajab 254 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq
Lifespan	42 years
Location of Shrine	Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-HĀDĪ ﷺ



Imām ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ﷺ is the 10th successor of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He is well-known by two titles: *al-Hādī* (the Guide) and *an-Naqī* (the Pure One). His father was the 9th Imām, Imām Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Jawād ﷺ, and his mother was Lady Sumānah.

AL-HĀDĪ: the Guide

AN-NAQĪ: the Pure One

Imām ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Hādī ﷺ was born in Medina on the 15th of Dhul Ḥijjah, in the year 212 AH. He was unmatched in his character and knowledge among the people. No one at his time was more learned or generous than him, and he was always soft-spoken, pious, and gentle with others.

Despite the harsh conditions of the time and the overbearing watchfulness of the government, the Imām ﷺ incessantly continued in educating and reviving the hearts of the Muslims, focusing his efforts on boosting their faith. The Imām's words and actions called for an elevation of awareness toward realizing the true purpose of life. By helping others reflect on the changing, temporary nature of this world, Imām al-Hādī ﷺ reminded people about the Hereafter. As the Imām ﷺ said:

> "This world is a market:
> some people gain in it, while others lose." [1&2]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Discuss what the purpose of life is. How does this saying guide people toward it?

1 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl,* P. 483.

2 *Imam Ali al-Hadi found on IMAM-US.org.* Retrieved June 6, 2024, from https://imam-us.org/islamic-awareness/islam-101/beliefs/ahl-al-bayt/imam-ali-al-hadi

254 AH
868 AD

Martyrdom of
Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ﷺ

SĀDĀT: descendants of the Prophet ﷺ

Like his father Imām al-Jawād ؑ, Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ؑ was very young when he became an Imām. He was only eight years old when his father died, and the duty of Imamate was bestowed upon him by Allah ﷻ. After the caliph, Muʿtaṣim Billāh—who poisoned Imām al-Jawād ؑ—died, Wāthiq Billāh became the caliph and ruled for five years. The Imām ؑ and the Shīʿah were allowed to live somewhat peacefully during his time of governorship. When Wāthiq died, Mutawakkil became the caliph. He was one of the most brutal and cruel ʿAbbāsid caliphs. He had a strong hatred for the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ (known in Arabic as *sādāt*) and the Shīʿah. He sent a vicious ruler to Medina, who under his orders severely oppressed the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ.[3]

Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ؑ was therefore kept under very close watch by the caliph. At first, Imām al-Hādī ؑ was living in Medina, and Mutawakkil had his spies watching the Imām ؑ. Later, Mutawakkil ordered that the Imām ؑ be arrested and brought to the capital city of Sāmarrāʾ, in Iraq. Here, Mutawakkil had the Imām ؑ kept in a poor and run-down house.

The 10th Imām ؑ maintained secret communications with the Shīʿah living in various areas. Through an intricate network of representatives, Imām al-Hādī ؑ would receive the religious dues from observant believers, and he would address questions of faith, Islamic Law, and politics.[4]

One day, someone spread a rumor to the tyrannical caliph that Imām al-Hādī ؑ had weapons and money in his house. Mutawakkil sent a man called Saʿīd to enter Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī's house unexpectedly and seize whatever he found there.

Saʿīd narrated that he went to the house in the middle of the night with a ladder. He climbed up to the roof and then tried coming down into the house's courtyard. Since it was dark, he lost his bearings.

Suddenly, he heard Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ؑ say to him: "Saʿīd, stay where you are until a candle is brought to you." Then, once he had light, he came down and saw the Imām ؑ dressed in a humble woolen garment. His prayer mat was open on the floor facing the *qiblah*.

Saʿīd says he went in and searched the entire house, but could not find anything. Then he narrates: "I felt ashamed in front of the Imām, and apologized to him, and said: 'Master, it grieves me to have entered your house without your permission, but I was ordered to do so.'" The Imām ؑ replied by reciting a verse of the Noble Qurʾān:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانتَصَرُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوا وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنقَلَبٍ يَنقَلِبُونَ ۝

Except those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah often, and defend after they have been wronged. And the wrongdoers will soon know what will be their end.[5&6]

3 Iṣfahāni, Abul Faraj, *Maqātil aṭ-Ṭālibiyyīn,* P. 395.
4 Bīshawāʾī, Mahdī, *Ṣīratul Āʾimmah,* Pp. 510-511
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shuʿarāʾ (26), Verse 227.
6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 50, P. 198

Out of his immense hatred for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, Mutawakkil tried flooding the grave of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ in Karbalāʾ by diverting the waters of the Euphrates River to go toward the grave. However, Allah ﷻ protected the grave and this cruel caliph was not successful in his attempt.

Out of frustration, Mutawakkil then ordered that anyone visiting Karbalāʾ for the purpose of *ziyārah* would have to have their hand or leg amputated, however, people still went for the *ziyārah* of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ out of love for him.[7]

STOP AND REFLECT: There have been many periods in history where travel to the graves of our Imāms ﷺ was either banned or severely punishable. Why do the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ use this as a strategy to further their aims? How can we counter such strategies?

One time when Mutawakkil was drunk, his son Muntaṣir revolted against his father and had him killed. Shortly afterward, Muntaṣir himself was killed, and was then succeeded by Mustaʿīn Billāh. After him, the caliph was Muʿtazz Billāh.

WORKING UNDER UNJUST RULERS

Since the ʿAbbāsid rulers were unjust and oppressive, working with them or for them was unlawful. Muḥammad ibnʿAlī ibnʿĪsā wrote to Imām al-Hādī ﷺ asking him whether working for the ʿAbbāsids and taking their money was permissible or not. Imām ﷺ replied:

> "That which happens by force or subjection is pardoned by Allah, otherwise, it is hated."[8]

In this reply, Imām al-Hādī ﷺ said that Allah ﷻ will not punish the person who works for the ʿAbbāsids, if his work was by force or subjection; but if it was done willingly, then it will be hated.

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ يَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُواْ عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۝

Say: 'O my people, work according to your ability; indeed, I too am working. Soon you will know in whose favor the outcome of that abode will be. Indeed, the wrongdoers will not be felicitous.'[9]

Activity 2.5a: Unjust Rulers

What is the jurisprudential perspective of working for unjust rulers? Did Imām al-Hādī ﷺ give any jurisprudential laws, or was it simply advice? Research your answer.

We see from Imām al-Hādī ﷺ that Muslims are not allowed to work for anyone who is considered unjust. This means that whatever Islam says is unjust would fall into this category, and thus not be permissible for a Muslim to engage in.

STOP AND REFLECT: How would this moral lesson apply to today's world?

It can be very easy for us to work for the unjust, either knowingly or unknowingly. Working directly for an unjust government is not allowed. Additionally, causing profit to go to any company which supports an unjust cause with a portion of their profits should be avoided as much as possible. For instance, many organizations give a portion of their earnings to "Israel" and the Zionist regime. Working for these companies outwardly may look like a permissible job, but in reality it is serving an unjust cause.

It is important to know who we are working for—even if it is volunteering. This way, our work will continue to have blessings in it for ourselves and others, and our money will not be from impermissible *(ḥarām)* sources.

7 The reference for this can be found at: https://www.islamquest.net/fa/archive/fa104337#.

8 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 17, P. 190.

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 135.

> "Indeed, Allah made this world an abode of trials, and the Hereafter an abode of outcome. He made the trials of this world to be a cause for rewards in the Hereafter; and rewards in the Hereafter to be a compensation for the trials in this world…"
>
> – Imām al-Hādī ﷺ

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss what opportunities you find in today's society that might fall into the category of working for unjust companies. Research some large organizations in your area.

Imām al-Hādī ﷺ remained under close surveillance by the government of that time, but he continued to reject injustice with steadfast resistance and never submitted to corruption. Eventually, Muʿtazz Billāh arranged for Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ﷺ to be poisoned. The Imām ﷺ was martyred within a few hours of being poisoned, and he was buried in Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE IMĀM ﷺ

The following words from Imām al-Hādī ﷺ call for insightful contemplation on the topic of death. They specifically discuss the way to think about this world and the next. The Imām ﷺ said: "Indeed, Allah made this world an abode of trials, and the Hereafter an abode of outcome. He made the trials of this world to be a cause for rewards in the Hereafter; and rewards in the Hereafter to be a compensation for the trials in this world…" [10]

In another tradition, the Imām ﷺ said: "…Think of your death in the arms of your family (members), while no doctor can stop you (from dying), and no loved one can do you any good…" [11]

STOP AND REFLECT: How can you apply these two sayings to become less attached to material pleasures and possessions?

10 *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, P. 483.

11 Daylamī, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, *ʿAlām ad-Dīn,* P. 311.

Activity 2.5b: Review Questions

1. In your own words, summarize the life of Imām al-Hādī ﷺ.

2. What do the various *aḥādīth* in this lesson teach us about the characteristics of the Imām ﷺ?

3. Why can we not work for unjust rulers? Does this apply to us today, and if so, then how?

2.6 Imām Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī az-Zakī al-ʿAskarī ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about the oppression that was committed on the Imām ﷺ by the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.
- Analyze characteristics of Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ through some *aḥādīth*.
- Learn about the mother of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, Lady Narjis Khātūn, who was the wife of the 11th Imām ﷺ.
- Analyze the tragedies done to the Imām's shrine by the oppressors of the modern day.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤASAN AL-ʿASKARĪ ﷺ

Name	Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī
Kunyah	Abū Muḥammad
Title	al-ʿAskarī (one who lived in a military camp area), az-Zakī (the pure one)
Father	ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Hādī ﷺ
Mother	Ḥudayth or Sausan
Date of Birth	8th or 10th Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 232 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Date of Martyrdom	8th Rabīʿ al-Awwal 260 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq
Lifespan	28 years
Location of Shrine	Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ʿASKARĪ ﷺ

232 AH
846 AD

Birth of Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ

Imām Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ﷺ is the 11th Divinely-appointed successor of the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was only 28 years old when he was martyred. He had the second shortest lifespan of all the Imāms ﷺ, with the exception of his grandfather, Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād ﷺ, who was martyred at the tender age of only 25. Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī's funeral prayer was conducted by his son, Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه; and he is buried next to his father, Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ﷺ in Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq.

His most famous title is *az-Zakī* which means 'the Pure One,' but he is also known as *al-ʿAskarī*—the one who was in the military area. This is because he lived in Sāmarrāʾ, where the caliph's army lived, and the city was therefore also known as *al-ʿAskar*—the army camp. Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ was well-known for his generosity, worship, knowledge, and humility. He was well built in physique and had handsome features. Imām Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī az-Zakī al-ʿAskarī ﷺ loved to worship Allah ﷻ, and would recite Ṣalātul Layl *(Tahajjud)* for most of the night.

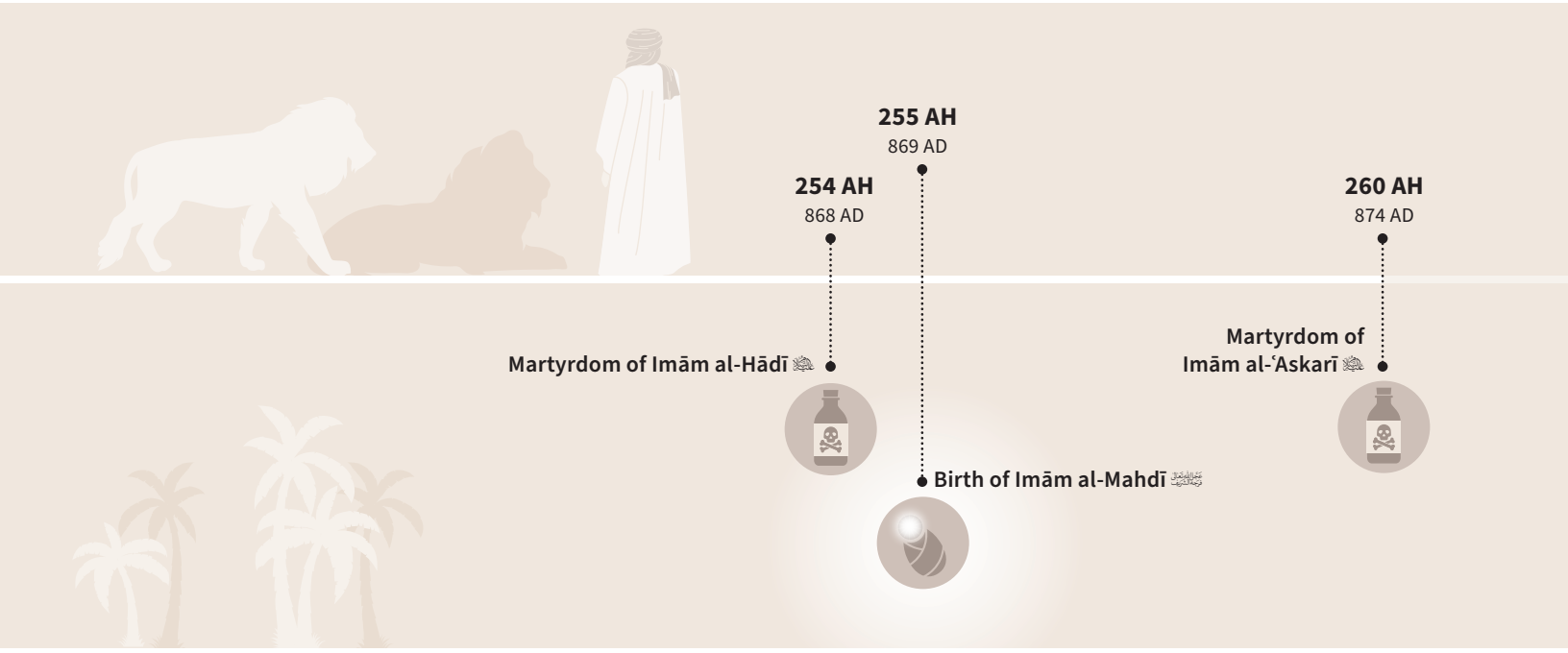
1 Irbilī, ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā, *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Maʿrifat al-Aʾimmah*, Vol. 2, P. 429.

GUIDANCE FROM THE 11TH IMĀM ﷺ

On one occasion, there was a very bad drought in Sāmarrāʾ. At that time, a Christian priest would raise his hands to the sky, and whenever he did this, it would rain miraculously. Many people became confused, and were in doubt about their faith in Islam. The caliph of that time, Muʿtamid, was in a terrible dilemma because he did not want to lose his own power and status, so he was forced to bring Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ—whom he had imprisoned—out of house arrest so he could attain his help. The Imām ﷺ went to the place where the Christian was praying for rain, and ordered the priest to open up his right hand and reveal what was hidden in it. When he opened his hand, everyone saw that there was a piece of bone in his palm. This bone was from the body of a Prophet of the past, and that is why it would rain every time he raised his hand (due to the blessings of it being from a Prophet of Allah ﷺ). The 11th Imām ﷺ explained this to the people, then he ﷺ then told the Christian man to pray again—without the bone in his hand—and this time it did not rain. Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ then prayed with his hands raised in the air, and it began to rain very heavily. This showed the special status of the Imām ﷺ with Allah ﷻ, and his ability to perform miracles by the permission of the Almighty Creator.[1]

AZ-ZAKĪ: the Pure One

AL-ʿASKARĪ: the one who was in the military area



THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, choose one of the stories told in this lesson, and describe what characteristics it shows in regard to Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ. Why is it necessary for the Imāms ﷺ to have such qualities within them?

OPPRESSION OF THE IMĀM ﷺ BY THE ʿABBĀSID CALIPHS

When the caliph, Muʿtazz Billāh (who poisoned Imām al-Hādī ﷺ) died, he was succeeded by Muhtadī, and thereafter by Muʿtamid. All of these caliphs continued to harass Imām Hasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ, and either kept him in prison or under house arrest. The ʿAbbāsid regime was full of tyranny, oppression, and injustice. It was natural for the Muslims to try to struggle and rebel against the ʿAbbāsid governments who ruled unjustly, and misappropriated the wealth and economical powers of those people. Many local revolts took place aiming at getting rid of enslavement, oppression, and persecution. The people within that society tried many times to bring about a revolution, but to no avail.

The ʿAbbāsid caliphs were particularly harsh toward Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ because they knew that the Shīʿahs believed his son, Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه, would be the final successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ who would destroy the tyrants and bring about justice and equality on the entire Earth. On one occasion, Muʿtamid put Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ in a cage of hungry lions. But the lions—despite being very hungry—came and put their heads at the feet of the Imām ﷺ, and rubbed their heads against him like little kittens, while the Imām ﷺ stood in prayer.[2]

The Imām ﷺ was imprisoned many times. He would periodically be released, and upon his release, he would give guidance to the social revolters. The caliph would fear the influence that the Imām ﷺ had on the people, so he would then put him under close surveillance once again.

It was under these extremely difficult circumstances that Imam al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه was born. Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ had to both hide the birth of his son from the enemies, yet inform only the very close and trusted Shīʿahs about his existence.

A narrator says: "One day, when the Imām was going to the residence of the caliph, we gathered in al-ʿAskar [a military camp] so that we could visit him on the way. However, we received a letter with this message: 'No one should greet me, or even point to me at all because you are not safe.'" This report shows just how much the government scrutinized any communication that the Imām ﷺ had with his Shīʿahs. But, the Imām ﷺ and his followers were able to meet one another at certain other times when they were given opportunities, and there are reports documented of such contacts.[3]

2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 50, Pp. 313-314; Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād,* Vol. 2, Pp. 334-335.
3 Rāwandī, Quṭb al-Dīn, *Al-Kharāʾij wal Jarāʾiḥ*, Vol. 1, P. 429.

THE MIRACLES OF IMĀM ḤASAN AL-ʿASKARĪ

An Ingot of Gold

Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī was once with his companion, Abū Hāshim Jafary. As they were riding in the deserts together, Abū Hāshim complained to the Imām about the difficulty he felt because of his debt. The Imām replied: "Do not worry about this, Allah will take care of it." The Imām then bent down and drew a line in the sand with his cane, then gave the man some gold and said: "Take this, Abū Hāshim, but do not tell anyone about it." Happily, Abū Hāshim took the gold that had appeared in the sand, and continued riding. He kept thinking to himself: *If this gold pays off my debt, Alhamdullilah; but I am a poor person, and I do not have any money to take care of my household—especially right now in winter when I have nothing for their food or clothes.* As he was thinking this, the Imām again bent down and drew a line in the sand, then said: "Abū Hāshim, take (from the sand) again, but do not tell anyone about this." This time, there was a silver nugget in the sand for Abū Hāshim to pick up. A few days after the Imām and his companions parted ways, Abū Hāshim went to sell the gold and silver he had received, and was able to pay off his debts and buy the necessities for his family.[4]

Imāms Speak All Languages

A man named Abū Ḥamzah Nāṣir once heard Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī speaking to each of his servants in their own languages. Abū Ḥamzah was amazed. He began thinking: *This man was born in Medina. No one saw him that much until after his father, Imām al-Hādī, passed away. How is this possible?*[5]

As he was just thinking about this, Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī came up to him and said: "Allah has separated His Proofs (Ḥujjah) from the rest of His creations, and He has given them knowledge of everything. They have been granted languages, genealogies, and events. If it was not for that, then there would be no difference between His Proofs (Ḥujjah) and those who follow them."[6]

Reading the Minds of Others

Ḥusayn ibn Ẓarīf reports that two questions were constantly on his mind, and he wanted to write to Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī to ask him about them. So he wrote to ask him about the first question, but forgot to ask him the second question which was about how to cure a fever.

Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī wrote a response to his first question, then added:

> *You also wanted to ask me about (how to cure) fever, but you forgot to write that. Take a piece of paper, and on it, write the verse of the Qurʾān: 'O fire, be cool and safe for Ibrāhīm.'*[7] *Then hang it over the person who has a fever.*[8]

NOTE: It is important to remember that a person needs to follow ordinary measures when one is sick, such as going to a doctor, taking the necessary medicine, etc. However, we also must pray to Allah ﷻ to make these measures effective and successful. This is how we have to understand the response of our 11th Imām .

Ḥusayn ibn Ẓarīf was amazed at this. He wrote what the Imām had instructed him to do, and the person who was ill with fever fully recovered.

We must realize that such extraordinary events and talents that the Imāms had were first of all given to them by Allah ﷻ as a means of proving that they were the representatives and beloved ones of Allah ﷻ. Secondly, such 'miraculous' incidents were sometimes necessary to combat the enemies of the time, and show the people who the true Proofs *(Ḥujjah)* of Allah ﷻ were on this Earth.

4 Ṣālehi, ʿAbdullāh, *Chehel Dāstan wa Chehel Ḥadīth az Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (40 Stories and 40 Ḥadīth from Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī)*.
5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 50, P. 268.
6 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 509, Ḥadīth #11; *Al-Kharāʾij wal Jarāʾiḥ*, Vol. 1, P. 436, Ḥadīth #14; *Al-Irshād,* Vol. 2, P. 343; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 50, P. 268, Ḥadīth #8.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 69.
8 Nīsābūrī, Al-Ḥusayn, *Ṭibb al-Aʾimmah*, P. 331.

Activity 2.6a: Comic Strip

Create a comic strip of one of the extraordinary events of the Imām ﷺ mentioned in this lesson.

SPOTLIGHT: LADY NARJIS KHĀTŪN

Lady Narjis is the birth mother of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, and the wife of Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ؑ. There are numerous narrations as to exactly who she was. Al-Masʿūdī was the first historian who reported about the mother of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ. According to his report, she was a slave woman whose name was Narjis.[9] This is also mentioned in a narration from Lady Ḥakīmah (who was the aunt of the 11th Imām ؑ, and the sister of Imām al-Hādī ؑ) which is the most famous and reliable narration about the birth of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ.[10] According to a narration by Shaykh Ṣadūq, she was a Christian from the Byzantine Empire (Rome) or Nubia, who was captured by the Muslims, and sent to Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ؑ. During this time, she became a Muslim. This is one of the first narrations about her nationality; however, this narration has lost some authenticity over time, even though there are other narrations about this.[11]

Due to the heavy persecution of the lovers of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ and the 11th Imām himself, Imām al-ʿAskarī's house was kept under strict surveillance. Rumors about the 12th Imām ﷺ, and the prophecies of the Mahdī had begun to surface, so Mutawakkil wanted to monitor the situation at the Imām's house, and have any child from the home of Imām al-ʿAskarī ؑ killed right away. Thus, the pregnancy of Lady Narjis, and the birth of our 12th Imām ﷺ was kept top secret.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why was it very important to hide the birth of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ given the political circumstances?

During her pregnancy, Lady Narjis Khātūn had no physical signs of carrying a child. In this way, Allah ﷻ protected the unborn Imām ﷺ and his mother from the heavy surveillance of the oppressors.

On Friday, the 15th day of the month of Shaʿbān, in the year 255 AH, the promise of Allah ﷻ was born. Lady Ḥakīmah, who was beside Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ؑ, was asked by the Imām ؑ to enter Lady Nargis's room. As she began to enter, she stopped suddenly—the room was full of pure and Divine light! Lady Ḥakīmah then saw a beautiful, infant boy who was bowing down toward the *qiblah* and praising Allah ﷻ.

The angels descended from the skies to congratulate Imām al-ʿAskarī ؑ on the birth of his son. The 11th Imām ؑ picked him up and asked him to speak by the Will of Allah ﷻ, so Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ recited the following verses of the Noble Qurʾān:

> "And We desired to show favor to those who were oppressed in the land, and make them leaders, and make them the heirs; and establish them in the land; and show Firʿawn and Hāmān and their hosts from them that of which they feared." [12 & 13]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, make a comparison between the time after the birth of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ and Prophet ʿĪsā ؑ. How are they similar? Chart your comparisons and similarities, and be prepared to share your answers.

9 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl ad-Dīn*, Vol. 2, P. 432.
10 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 51, P. 2.
11 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Dānishnāmah-yi Imām al-Mahdī*, Vol. 2, P. 179.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verses 5-6.
13 Bayāḍī, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad, *Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm ilā Mustaḥaqqī at-Taqdīm*, Vol. 2, P. 209.

THE ʿASKARĪYYAYN MASJID AND SHRINES

On February 22nd, 2006, a group of terrorists and enemies of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ stormed the Shrine of Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī ﷺ and Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ dressed up as guards, and imprisoned the servants of the Shrine in one of the courtyards. Then, throughout the night, they rigged the Shrine with bombs. In the morning, they detonated the bombs, and severely damaged the masjid and destroyed its golden dome. The whole dome crumbled on top of the graves of the Imāms ﷺ, and the others who are buried in their vicinity.

Almost a year later, on June 13th, 2007, around 9am local time, some terrorists bombed the Shrine again, and the two ten-story golden minarets that were still standing there were completely destroyed.

ʿAskarīyyayn Shrine in Samarra, Iraq, 2006

ʿAskarīyyayn Shrine in Samarra, Iraq, 2007

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why do terrorists bomb our holy sites? Why do you think there is still animosity against the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

The continued attacks on the holy sites shows that the hatred and jealousy for the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ continues until this day. It is only with the return of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه that the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ will truly be destroyed. Shayṭān truly affects the minds and hearts of some people who claim to be Muslim; however, Allah ﷻ has promised that the remembrance of His final Messenger ﷺ and his Noble Household ﷺ will never be lost because they are the lights *(anwār)* of Allah ﷻ. Additionally, there is the promise of Allah ﷻ in the Noble Qurʾān:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِؤُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light—though the disbelievers should be averse.[14]

The ʿAskarīyyayn Shrine is now kept under very close security, and its dome and minarets have been restored.

ʿAskarīyyayn Shrine in Samarra, Iraq, 2024

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaff (61), Verse 8.

Activity 2.6b: Review Questions

1. Think about how an Imām ﷺ is able to speak all different languages. How can this prove the Imamate of them, especially during the time of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?

2. What is one of the titles of Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ? What does it mean?

3. What happened in the story with the Christian man who could make it rain? How did the 11th Imām ﷺ restore the faith of the people after the confusion that was created?

4. Knowing what you know about Imām al-Mahdī's parents, why do you think that some people will claim the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is from them? Is this a positive or negative thing?

2.7 Imām al-Mahdī's Occultation

OBJECTIVES

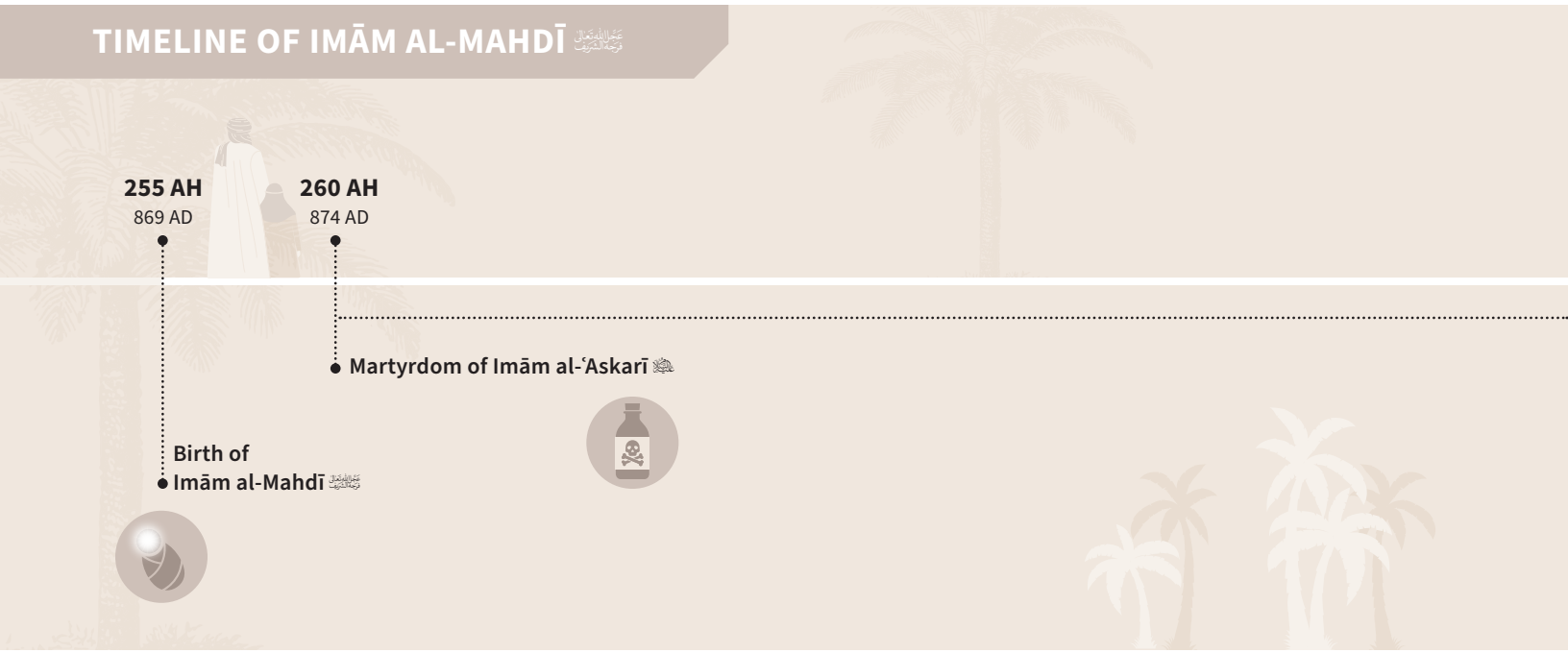
WE WILL:

- Learn some of the different titles of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف and their meanings.
- Understand the differences between the minor and major occultation.
- Analyze the benefits of having an Imām in occultation.
- Look at the long lives of some of the previous Prophets عليهم السلام to understand how Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is still alive at such an age.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

Name	Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan
Kunyah	Abū Ṣāliḥ (Father of Righteousness)
Title	al-Mahdī, al-Ḥujjah ibn al-Ḥasan, al-Muntaḍar
Parents	Ḥasan ibn ʿAli al-ʿAskarī عليه السلام
Mother	Narjis Khātūn
Date of Birth	15th Shaʿbān 255 AH
Birthplace	Sāmarrāʾ, Iraq
Date of Minor Occultation	260 AH
Date of Major Occultation	329 AH

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف



TITLES OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

Our 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is not usually referred to by his own name, but rather by his titles.

Some of his most common titles include:

- **al-Mahdī** (the Guide)
- **al-Qā'im** (the One who Rises)
- **al-Muntaḍar** (the Awaited One)
- **al-Ḥujja**h (the Proof)
- **Ṣāḥib al-ʿAsr waz-Zamān**
  (Master of the present time and age)

BIRTH OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف was born on the 15th of Shaʿbān, in the year 255 AH. When he was only 5 years old, his father, Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī عليه السلام was poisoned and martyred. From the year of 260 AH, the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف was not accessible to the public. He had specific representatives through whom the Shīʿah could write letters and communicate with the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. This went on for about 69 years (until 329 AH), and is known as the period of The Minor Occultation *(Ghaybat aṣ-Ṣughrā).*

When the fourth representative of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف passed away, the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف did not appoint anyone else. The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف told the last representative to tell people that after his death, the Major Occultation *(Ghaybat al-Kubrā)* will begin, and after that, no one can claim that they have direct access to the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف until the end of time, when Allah ﷻ will command Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف to reveal his identity and fill the Earth with peace and justice.

The main reason for the occultation is to protect the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. Every Imām عليه السلام before him was either poisoned or killed unjustly by the sword. Human beings must truly learn the value of an Imām—especially after they have been ruled over by tyrants and corrupt leaders, and they realize that no one can really establish a just society except one who is appointed by Allah ﷻ.

Shīʿahs believe that Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف lives amongst people, but individuals do not recognize him when they see him, and he often helps them when they are in need without their knowing that it was the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف who came to their assistance. The 'return' of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف from occultation will therefore be the revealing of his true identity to people. At the moment, he is able to hide his identity with help from Allah ﷻ for his safety and protection.

Many *aḥadīth* are reported from other Imāms ﷺ that since the time of the creation of Prophet Ādam ﷺ, there has always been someone on the Earth as a representative of Allah ﷻ, and it is impossible for the Earth to exist without this. There is a tradition which says:

> "Indeed, the Earth will not be empty from the ḥujjah (proof) of Allah until the Day of Judgment." [1]

When Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ was born, Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ showed the baby boy to several very close Shīʿahs, and asked them to inform others that the final Imām ﷺ had been born. Since then, many Shīʿah scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* have had the honor of meeting the Imām ﷺ. During the Major Occultation, no one can claim to know the exact whereabouts of the Imām ﷺ, so most scholars realize or reveal that they met the Imām ﷺ after he left.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What is the difference between the Minor and Major Occultation? Make a bullet point comparison list.

HIS LONGEVITY

Many people ask how is it possible for a person—in this case the 12th Imām ﷺ—to live for so long in this world? In some *ahādīth,* we are told that when Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ returns, some people will deny him because of how young he looks. It is said that he will have the appearance of a 40 year old man.[2] What is more strange is that no one doubts that Shayṭān—who lived for thousands of years even before Prophet Ādam ﷺ—is still alive to this day. If Allah ﷻ can keep an enemy alive to this day, then can He not keep His Proof on Earth alive for however long He desires?

Other sects of Islam, such as the Ahlus Sunnah, also believe in Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, and that he is a descendant of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ. They quote narrations *(aḥādīth)* from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that this world will not come to an end until the Mahdī comes forth and establishes peace and justice in the entire world.[3] However, Ahlus Sunnah Muslims believe that the Mahdī ﷺ will be born in the future closer to the time when he rises to power.

STOP AND REFLECT: How would you answer this question if it was posed to you: "How is it possible for someone to live for more than 1000 years?"

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Niʿmah*, P. 567.

2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 52, Pp. 279 and 285.

3 At-Tirmidhī, *Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Vol. 4, P. 438; Ḥammād, Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, Ch. 52; Sijistānī, Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd,* Vol. 4, P. 106. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources)

In Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 14 of the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ mentions that Prophet Nūḥ ﷺ remained among his people for 950 years. Many historians believe this was **before** the flood, but then afterward he still lived until he was around 2500 years old. Historians also report a long life for certain Prophets ﷺ, as well as other people whom Allah ﷻ willed. For example, the Almighty One ﷻ allowed various people to live long lives, some of whom are still alive to this day. The following are lifespans reported in some narrations, and although we are not entirely sure of all of them, they seem to indicate that there are definitely people who lived for very long periods.

- Prophet Ādam ﷺ: 930 years.
- Lady Ḥawwāʾ: 930 years.
- Prophet Shayth ﷺ: 900 years.
- Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ: 700 years.
- Prophet Ḥūd ﷺ: 464 years.
- Prophet Idrīs ﷺ: over 900 years; and according to some narrations, he is still alive.[4]
- Luqmān, the wise: 3800 years.
- Prophet ʿIsā ﷺ: over 2000 years; and is still alive.
- Prophet Khiḍr ﷺ: still alive.

From the above, we can easily conclude that Allah ﷻ is not bound by our understanding of the laws of nature or science. For the Almighty One, who has Power over everything, keeping someone alive endlessly is as easy as creating the entire universe. He merely says: 'Be!' and it is! We also realize through all of this that we know very little about the mysteries of the universe, and ultimately everything runs by the commands and Will of Allah ﷻ—not how we think or perceive it should run.

BENEFITS OF AN IMĀM IN OCCULTATION

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the use of having an Imām ﷺ who is in occultation? Why would Allah ﷻ keep an Imām ﷺ alive for so long if people have no access to him?

An Imām is in fact a means through which Allah ﷻ sends blessings to His creations. In some narrations, we are told that:

> "If there was no Imām, then the Earth would collapse."[5]

In other words, as long as an Imām ﷺ is present in this world—even if the entire beings were to stop believing in Allah ﷻ—He would continue to keep the world alive because of the presence of an Imām ﷺ.

Often we hear about great disasters and we wonder if the world might end suddenly because of a nuclear war, or being hit by a meteorite, or other such theories. But then we recall the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ where he said: "Even if only one day is left for the world to end, Allah will extend that day so a man can come forth from my descendants who will fill the world with justice and peace, as it was filled with injustice and oppression."[6] This gives us hope that Allah ﷻ wants human beings to succeed, and live with one another in peace and harmony. It also promises us that as long as the Imām ﷺ has not returned, the world cannot end.

One of the greatest benefits of the occultation is how advanced in their religious understanding, the Muslims—in particular, the Shīʿah—have become. In the ages when the Imāms ﷺ were present, any doubts or questions were put before them, and the answers were readily available. There was no need to ponder deeply on the verses of the Noble Qurʾān, or try to understand the basic principles on which the Laws of Islam were based. However, with the occultation, the scholars have had to take a lead in guiding people, and this has resulted in the development of many Islamic Sciences such as: *Tafsīr* (Qurʾānic Exegesis), *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Principles of Jurisprudence), *ʿIlm al-Kalām* (Theology), and so on.

4 Baḥrānī, Syed Hāshim, *Tafsīr al-Burhān,* Vol. 6, P. 350.

5 *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Niʿmah*, P. 393.

6 Nayshābūrī, Muḥammad ibn Fattāl, *Rawḍat al-Wāʿiẓīn wa Baṣīrat al-Muttaʿiẓīn,* Vol. 2, P. 261.

We must always believe that Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is fully aware of our efforts, and is guiding us from behind the scenes. Ultimately, he is the guardian of Islam and the Noble Qurʾān. In one beautiful *ḥadīth*, we are told that during the occultation, people benefit from the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف just like all of creation benefit from the sun even when it is hidden by the clouds.[7]

STOP AND REFLECT: How is the sun a useful comparison to make with the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?

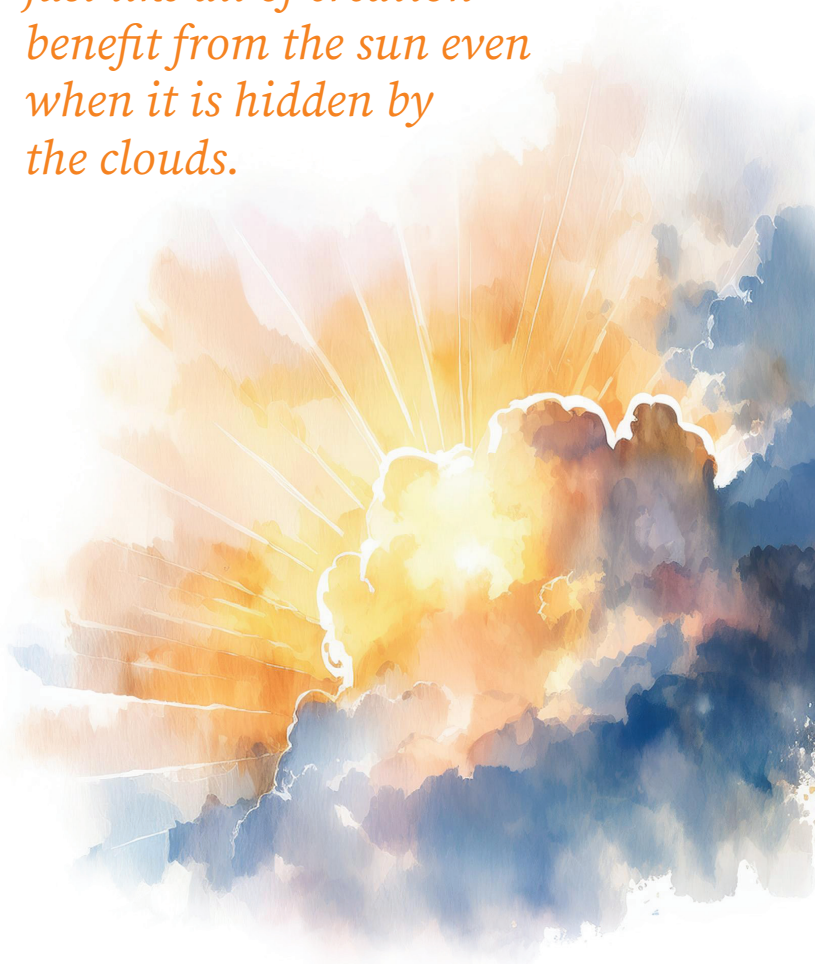
Imagine a person who is born in a place where it is always cloudy, and they can never see the sun. They may deny the existence of the sun because they do not realize that the light and heat they enjoy during the day comes from something that is hidden behind the clouds. They may even ask: "What is the use of a sun that we never see?" However, they would never even be able to survive if the sun was not there.

When Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq عليه السلام was asked why the occultation of the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف would take place, he replied that the reason will only become truly apparent after the return of the Imām عليه السلام;[8] and that the wisdom behind the occultation was like that of the story of Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and Prophet Khiḍr عليه السلام. [One can read this story in the Noble Qurʾān in Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verses 65-82].

When a person reads these verses, one realizes that at the time when the different events were transpiring, Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام could not understand the wisdom behind the things that Prophet Khiḍr عليه السلام was doing. The actions of Prophet Khiḍr عليه السلام made no sense whatsoever to Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام, so he kept objecting to them—until finally Prophet Khiḍr عليه السلام told him the reasons behind his actions, then he concluded by saying: "That is the interpretation of what you could not have patience about."[9]

In other words, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq عليه السلام wanted to teach us that we must not be arrogant such that we believe or think we can understand every secret of Allah ﷻ, and the wisdom behind all of His actions. Nor must we doubt what is given to us in authentic narrations *(aḥādīth)*. Instead, we must be patient until the reasons are revealed to us.

During the occultation, people benefit from the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف just like all of creation benefit from the sun even when it is hidden by the clouds.



7 *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Niʿmah*, Vol. 1, P. 253, Ḥadīth #3.

8 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, P. 246, Ḥadīth #8.

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 82.

Activity 2.7a: Giving Advice

Reflect on how we can prepare ourselves and bear patiently for the return of our living Imām ﷺ. Then, think of some good advice which you can give to a struggling Muslim; and three ways they can implement what you advised them about.

ADVICE:

THREE WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THE ADVICE:

In another *ḥadīth*, the Imām ﷺ compared the occultation to the time when the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ went to Egypt, but did not realize that the king who was helping them with grain was actually their brother, Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ. The comparison is in reference to this verse: "[After some years] The brothers of Yūsuf came [seeking food], and entered (into) his presence. He recognized them, but they did not recognize him."[10]

In other words, the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف is in our midst and we benefit immensely from him. Just because we do not recognize him, it does not mean that we are not benefiting from him.

ĪMĀN: faith

YAQĪN: conviction

Belief in the unseen is a trait of the faithful believers.

Belief in the unseen is a trait of the faithful believers. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once told his companions that the Muslims at the end of times will be superior to them because they will believe in Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ even though they never saw him; and they will believe in an Imām without seeing him. They will only see writings on paper (i.e. the Noble Qurʾān and the *aḥādīth*), but it will be enough for them to have faith *(īmān)* and conviction *(yaqīn)*.[11]

We have the opportunity to say that we truly believe—not by physically witnessing miracles, or seeing the Prophet ﷺ—but because of the intellect given to us by Allah ﷻ, and the purity of our hearts. In this way, we may become among those whom Allah ﷻ describes as follows:

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ. الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ۝

That is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God-conscious (ones), those who believe in the Unseen, they establish the prayer, and they spend out of what We have provided for them.[12]

The occultation, therefore, is a test for people, and it distinguishes the truly faithful ones from the hypocrites. It is also an opportunity for us to perhaps become better than what we would be if the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف was always in front of us.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 58.

11 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 4, P. 366.

12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verses 2-3.

Activity 2.7b: Research Review

During every Imām's time, there were companions who were very learned and pious individuals. For example, during the time of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ, there was Abū Baṣīr and Zurārah; and during the time of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, there was Hishām ibn Ḥakam. Even during the times of the later Imāms ﷺ—the 9th to the 12th—there were scholars who compiled the *aḥādīth* of the Imāms ﷺ and wrote books, such as Ḥusayn ibn Saʿd al-Ahwāzī, Dāwūd ibn Qāsim ibn Isḥāq, and many others.

The Shīʿah scholars who lived during the occultation of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه made significant contributions to Islam, and toward preserving the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

READ CHAPTER 2 from the following book, *Fiqh and Fuqaha* at **http://www.al-Islam.org/fiqh/**, then fill in the blanks below. You will find the answers to most of these questions in this book.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. During the Minor Occultation (260-329 AH), Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه had four representatives/ambassadors. The first one of these was _____ . Then he was succeeded by his son, _____ who was the second representative.

2. The third representative of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه was _____ ; and the last one was _____. He died on _____ , 329 AH, which marked the end of the Minor Occultation, and the beginning of the Major Occultation.

3. After the Minor Occultation, the Shīʿah relied mostly on four books of *Ḥadīth (Kutub al-Arbaʿa)* for their guidance from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. These four books are: _____ by Shaykh Kulaynī; _____ by Shaykh Ṣadūq; and the two books: _____ and _____ by Shaykh Ṭūsī. The largest Shīʿah collection of *Ḥadīth* however, is the book called _____ by ʿAllāmah Majlisī.

4. One of the most famous Shīʿah scholars who passed away in 329 AH was _____. He was the father of the famous scholar, _____ , and together they are known as the *Ṣadiqayn* (the two truthful ones).

5. Another brilliant Shīʿah scholar was _____ . His real name was Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Nuʿmān. He was born in 334 AH, and died in 413 AH.

6. The two most famous students of Shaykh Mufīd were _____ and Sayyid ar-Raḍī. The latter is famously known as the compiler of _____ .

Activity 2.7b: Research Review (continued)

7. Another great Shīʿah scholar was _____ , who was the successor of Sayyid Murtaḍa (also known as *ʿAlam al-Hudā).* He initially lived in Baghdād, but when his home and library were burnt down in a Shīʿah-Sunnī conflict, he moved to _____ where he established the *Ḥawza ʿIlmīyyah* (Seminary for Knowledge) which continued to produce prominent and pious scholars for a thousand years, until late last century. He was the sole *marjaʿ* of his time, and his works are studied until this day. In fact, when the Shīʿah scholars write or say "Shaykh" without giving a name, they are referring to him. He compiled two of the four well-known books of *Ḥadīth (Kutub al-Arbaʿa)* of the Shīʿah.

8. A scholar who rose to prominence from his childhood was _____ . His real name was Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn ʿAlī ibn Muṭahhar. He was born in 648 AH, and died 726 AH. His works are still studied in the *Ḥawza* today at the highest levels.

9. Muḥammad ibn Makkī was another great Shīʿah scholar from Jabal ʿĀmil (South Lebanon), and because he was imprisoned and killed for his faith, he is known amongst the Shīʿah as _____ . His most famous work is *Lumʿah* which is studied to this day in the *Ḥawza*.

10. Two centuries later, in 966 AH, another great scholar, Shaykh Zayn ad-Dīn—who wrote a commentary on *Lumʿah* (known as *Sharh Lumʿah)*, was executed by the Ahlus Sunnah rulers. He is well-known as _____.

11. Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ardabīlī was so pious that he was popularly known as _____. He also contributed greatly to the Islamic Sciences, particularly in the area of *Fiqh*. He died in 993 AH.

12. Shaykh Waḥīd Behbahānī was a great scholar who saved the Institution of *Ijtihād*[13] by defeating the _____ movement among the Shīʿah, especially in Karbalāʾ, which was their stronghold. He was born in 1116 AH, and died in 1205 AH.

13. Another great scholar was _____ . He was born 1155 AH, and died in 1212 AH. So great was his status that Shaykh Jaʿfar Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ—himself a scholar of the highest rank—was one of his students; and it is said that Shaykh Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ used to wipe this great scholar's slippers with the end of his turban.

13 This is an Islamic legal term referring to independent reasoning by an expert in Islamic Law; or the thorough exertion of a jurist's mental faculty in finding a solution to a legal question.

14. This great Shīʿah scholar, _____ , was a descendant of the Prophet's great companion, Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī. He was born on the _____ *(Eidul Ghadīr),* 1214 AH, and died in Najaf in the year 1281 AH. He was a genius of extraordinary caliber. He established new ways of studying *Fiqh* and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh;* and his two great works: *Ar-Rasāʾil* and *Al-Makāsib,* are still a requirement in the *Ḥawza* for anyone who wishes to become a *mujtahid*.[14]

15. _____ is a more contemporary scholar. He was the sole *marjaʿ* for the Shīʿahs before Āyatullāh Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm; and he died in Qum in 1381 AH at the age of 90.

16. _____ was the sole *marjaʿ* for the Shīʿahs after Āyatullāh Burūjerdī. He was the teacher of Āyatullāh Khoei, and the *Ḥawza* in Najaf grew immensely under him, with almost 8000 students. He died in 1390 AH (1971) in _____ and was buried there in the great modern library he established.

17. _____ was a student of Āyatullāh Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, and succeeded him as the sole *marjaʿ* until the Revolution of Iran in 1979. He made great contributions to various Islamic Sciences; and died in Najaf under the rule of Saddam, on the 8th of Safar, 1413 AH (August 8th, 1992). It is said that he trained more than 1000 students over the five decades in which he taught constantly. One of his most famous students is Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī Sīstānī.

18. _____ was a brilliant scholar and thinker. He is remembered for his brave stand against the tyrant Saddam in Iraq, and was tortured then killed by Saddam in Baghdād on April 9th, 1980, at the age of _____ . He was a child prodigy, and would have undoubtedly been the sole *marjaʿ* of the Shīʿah world had he lived. His sister, _____ , was also tortured and killed by Saddam. His works on *Uṣūl al-Fiqh,* Islamic Economics, and Islamic Philosophy are still studied in Seminaries today.

19. _____ is well-known for bringing about the Revolution in Iran. He was also a great scholar and mystic who wrote extensively on *Akhlāq* (Morals and Etiquettes) and *ʿIrfān* (Islamic Mysticism). After the Revolution of Iran in 1979, many Shīʿah began following him. He died on the 3rd of June, in the year 1989.

20. _____ was not an 'Āyatullāh' in the traditional sense, but he was a prominent thinker and scholar. He compiled a commentary *(tafsīr)* of the Qurʾān known as _____ in 20 volumes. It is regarded to be one of the finest *tafsīr* works in Islam to this day. He died on November 15th, 1981 at the age of 89.

14 A *mujtahid* is an individual who is qualified to exercise *ijtihād* in the evaluation of Islamic Law.

2.8 Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف: Return of the Awaited

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Analyze what the return of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will bring to society.
- Study the *aḥādīth* about the signs of reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.
- Demonstrate an understanding of our own role in the return of our 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

I love Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, however, I am not a perfect Muslim, and fear that I may be among those who will face the Imām's vengeance. Should I fear his reappearance? Think about this question with a partner. How would you begin to answer this question? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

A correct understanding in regard to the reason and philosophy of Imām al-Mahdī's uprising will not only remove fear about the event from the hearts of people, but it will also bring about happiness and anticipation of this great event. The following traditions have been narrated about the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف:

> "The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth shall be pleased with him."[1]
>
> "Those who are alive will wish that those who passed away were able to see all of the good that Allah bestowed on the people [through Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف]."[2]

The reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will be the brightest and greatest moment in the history (of humankind). Humanity's desire for peace and justice will be actualized by the Imām's appearance and the actions that he will take upon his advent. People will take pride in his existence—following him enthusiastically and with awareness.

Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف should not be viewed as a fearful or vengeful warrior who will sweep through the land and seek retribution wherever he goes. Rather, we must view him as a leader appointed by Allah ﷻ, whose leadership is based on the truth, and who is the proof of Allah's implementation of justice on Earth. After his return, safety and security will spread all over the world. Envy, stinginess, greed, and other negative qualities will vanish; and kindness and generosity will take over to the point where people will search for poor individuals to give their *zakāh* to, but they will not be able to find anyone.[3] Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will take the position of a liberator and savior, and he will aid the oppressed and marginalized. He will also be a great support for those who are righteous.

1 Shaykh Ṭabrasī, *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, Vol. 4, Under the explanation of Verse 128 of Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7).
2 Ḥillī, Ibn Idrīs, *Kitāb as-Sarā'ir al-Ḥāwī li Taḥrīr al-Fatāwī*, Vol. 2, P. 61.
3 Bukhārī, Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī*, Vol. 2, P. 136 (Ahlus Sunnah Source); *Kitāb as-Sarā'ir al-Ḥāwī li Taḥrīr al-Fatāwī*, Vol. 2, P. 64.

When Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ reappears, everything in creation will reach its full potential. His reappearance will be similar to a long awaited rainfall on barren land. Non-living things, plants, and human beings alike, will all be rejuvenated by him in such a way that their full potential and abilities will become manifest, allowing them to attain the height of spiritual development and ultimately, true perfection. All of creation will welcome Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ with enthusiasm—knowing that his reappearance will bring about immense blessings. The lands, mountains, and everything in nature will be in anticipation of those blessings.[4]

Instead of fearing, worrying, or feeling anxious about the Imām's reappearance, we should be hopeful and feel inner peace in anticipation of his return.

STOP AND REFLECT: In what ways can you create inner peace and hopefulness while waiting for the Imām ﷺ?

Imām al-Mahdī's rule will encompass the entire world in such a way that all borders will be erased, and the laws of the Almighty will be the official rule of law. In his first steps of reformation and the cultivation of humanity, Imām ﷺ will complete the intellect and knowledge of the people. He will also amend people's ethics *(akhlāq)* and their behavior. Imām's mission will focus on cultural development and reformation, rather than punishment and vengeance. Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ will come to facilitate humankind's salvation, not to terrorize them through a mission based on enmity. Therefore, we should have faith that we will all benefit from the peace, safety, and security of his reappearance.

Imām ﷺ will liberate humanity from oppression, disbelief, ignorance, and tyranny. His guidance will lead humankind to the attainment of Allah's pleasure, and the highest levels of perfection. He will eradicate the narrow-minded and close-minded views which are the source of many of the conflicts and polarization in society.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think about the current society we live in today. How many things can you and a partner think of that are mainstream, yet full of disbelief, oppression, ignorance, or completely forbidden acts? Make a list of these, and how the return of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ will change the outlook of society. Why will the coming of the Imām ﷺ bring relief to the believers? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

4 Naysābūrī, Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Vol. 4, Pp. 465 and 514. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

This positive information and good news should bring about complete hope and anticipation for the establishment of the universal leadership of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ. However, those who perpetuate falsehood and all that is forbidden—such as those who are corrupt, the oppressors, and the disbelievers—need to be fearful of the Imām's reappearance. However, they should only be afraid in the event that they continue to disbelieve, refuse to do good, and persist in their oppression and tyranny. Their acts of rebellion and blatant persistence on the wrong path will bring about the wrath of Imām ﷺ.

We have a duty to be actively waiting for the Imām's advent.

As young Muslims, we have a duty to be actively waiting for the Imām's advent, rather than fearing his return; we need to channel our anxiousness and fear into positive action. We can work on our flaws, and try to stay away from sinning, so that we can hasten the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, through striving to be his companions and helpers. When we do not work on improving ourselves, our subconscious feelings can manifest themselves as anxiousness about the return of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ.

STOP AND REFLECT: How will fulfilling our duties, responsibilities, and obligatory actions going to aid Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ? How do you think it impacts him when we sin?

Upholding our *wājibāt*[5] is an immediate responsibility that we must fulfill, and when we avoid them or perform sins, then Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ is aware of all this. He prays for us to be ready for him, just as we pray for his reappearance. But without a genuine willingness to do better, we cannot expect that the Imām ﷺ will return. There are other positive behaviors we can adopt as well, for example, when we shed tears for Imām Ḥusayn ؑ and his companions, we should also pray that we are able to be amongst the companions of our 12th Imām ﷺ during his time. At times it may be easy for us to settle into thinking that our society is in a good state, yet the reality is without the presence of our Imām ﷺ, we are truly at a loss.

SIGNS OF THE RETURN OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ ﷺ

Numerous signs foretelling the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ have been narrated in the books of *Ḥadīth*. Many of these signs are general in nature, and talk about a world filled with injustices such as: open disbelief in Allah ﷻ, widespread adultery and homosexuality, widespread drinking of alcohol, disobedience and disrespect of parents, taking and giving of usury freely, use of music and intoxicants, obsession with the world and excessive materialism, lack of any sense of shame or modesty, an inability to distinguish good from bad and right from wrong, the rule of oppressors and the righteous being weak in power, and so on.

Then there are signs which are more specific, and talk about increased natural disasters such as earthquakes and landslides due to the excessive sinning of people.6 There will also be a lot of turmoil amongst nations with people rising against their rulers or killing them. Some nations will invade others, and each ruler will rule for only a brief period before they are replaced by others. At one point, many people will die of human-made disasters (such as wars); while many others will die from resulting natural disasters (such as plague, starvation, and so on). In other words, the world will become really bad; and people will become desperate for a savior before Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ returns.[7]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, choose one of the metaphors used in this lesson to create a guide "How to teach others about Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ." Include reasons why we need to strengthen our belief in the Imām ﷺ despite not being able to see him in our daily lives.

5 This is the plural of *wājib* which are those things which a person must perform, in other words, they are obligatory or compulsory things.

6 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 448.

7 Ghaznawī, Jamāl ad-Dīn, *Kitāb Uṣūl ad-Dīn,* P. 206 (Ahlus Sunnah Source); Rajab al-Bursī, *Mashāriq Anwār al-Yaqīn,* P. 72.

NARRATIONS MARKING SIGNS OF HIS RETURN

There are some signs about the coming of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ which are regarded as 'definite signs,' and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ told us not to expect the Imām ﷺ until these signs have manifested. They will occur very close to the time of the Imām's return. These major signs are:

1. **A Voice from the Sky.** A loud voice will be heard in the heavens announcing the return of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ. Everyone will hear it and understand it in their own language. The true believers will realize this to be the sign of the Imām's return. Others will begin to doubt it, and say that they were just imagining what they heard. In some reports, it is mentioned that a face will be seen in the sky which is brighter than the sun.
2. **Coming of Sufyāni.** An evil man from the descendants of Abū Sufyān will rise to power in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. He will fight against Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, but will eventually be killed.
3. **The army of Sufyāni will be 'swallowed'** in a landslide at a place between Mecca and Medina.
4. **Coming of Yemāni.** Someone will rise up from Yemen and bring people toward Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ.
5. **Murder of *Nafs az-Zakiyyah* (The Pure Soul).** A very pious and righteous man will be murdered in Mecca right in front of the Kaʿbah between the Black Stone Corner of the Kaʿbah *(Rukn al-Ḥajar)* and the Place of Ibrāhīm *(Maqām Ibrāhīm)*.[8]

Many other signs can be found in the books of *Ḥadīth* (Traditions) and *Tārikh* (History), such as *Kitāb al-Irshād* by Shaykh Mufīd. However, it should be noted that whatever Allah ﷻ Wills and Commands will happen, and the return of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ is not bound to these signs.

8 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl ad-Dīn*, Vol. 2, P. 650, Ḥadīth #7.

Activity 2.8a: Timeline

Create a timeline using the different narrations *(aḥādīth)* to show the signs of the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

Activity 2.8b: Review Questions

1. Do any of the *aḥādīth* come as a surprise to you? Why or why not?

2. In this lesson, it states that: **"Those who are alive will wish that those who passed away were able to see all of the good that Allah bestowed on the people [through Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف]."** What do you think this means?

3. Write down one of the definite signs of the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. What did the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام tell us about these signs?

4. What is the description of the injustices that will be prevalent in societies before the coming of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف? Compare the description of the society you live in now to the society described in the narrations. Do you feel that the societies are similar? Or do we still have a long way to go before the coming of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف?

Activity 2.8c: Advertisement

Create a poster advertisement to encourage Muslims to build up their faith *(īmān)* during the occultation of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ. List some things which they can do to help them anticipate the return of the Imām ﷺ.

Use the rubric below to ensure you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 **Ineffective**	**2** **Somewhat Effective**	**3** **Considerably Effective**	**4** **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/ or had no sources.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and most of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. All of the graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all of the borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet all of the Islamic Principles.	Content met some of the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Advertisement was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	Advertisement was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	Advertisement was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Advertisement was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The advertisement was not convincing or compelling.	The advertisement was somewhat convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function as an advertisement.	The advertisement was extremely compelling and convincing.

CHAPTER 3

History of Prophets عليهم السلام

3.1 Prophet Sulaymān عليه السلام

3.2 Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام

3.1 Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Articulate the need for an Islamic government.
- Demonstrate an exemplary just leader through the example of Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ.
- Understand the position of government in Islam, religion, and politics.
- Recall the occultation of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ, and how Divinely-appointed leaders are only appointed by Allah ﷻ.

Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ (Solomon in English) was the son of Prophet Dawūd ﷺ (David in English). Being a Prophet, he was immaculate and did not commit any sins. He is one of the Prophets who is mentioned several times in the Noble Qur'ān.

Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ is also one of the personalities mentioned in the Bible as a king who had hundreds of wives, and did many terrible things so that he could become a king. It paints a very disrespectful picture of this great Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Unfortunately, some of these stories have seeped into Muslim texts as well. We have to be especially careful of traditions that go against the Noble Qur'ān and the basic principles of Islam. If a specific narration contradicts the Noble Qur'ān, then it cannot be considered as authentic or reliable.

STOP AND REFLECT: Recall the story of Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ. What attributes made him an exceptional leader?

PROPHET SULAYMĀN ﷺ IN THE QUR'ĀN

In the Noble Qur'ān, Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ is introduced as one of the greatest Prophets ﷺ, who was a wise king and a devoted servant of Allah ﷻ. He was granted wisdom, as well as some special miracles. Some of these miracles included:

- Having control over natural phenomena like the wind.
- Being able to communicate with animals, and understand their talk.
- Having control over the *jinn*.

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qur'ān:

وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمِينَ ۝

And [We disposed] for Sulaymān the wind, which blew forcefully by his command toward the land which We have blessed, and over all things We have (complete) knowledge. [1]

Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ was granted these powers and gifts. He did not ask for a mighty kingdom and authority because he wanted fame, glory, or power; rather, his aim was to guide the people, and establish justice in the world. History does not show at any time that Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ ever used his powers for his own ambitions or for personal gain. Instead, he placed his great power and means at the service of his people to guide them under the banner of belief in One God. Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ made a supplication to Allah ﷻ which is as follows:

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

So he (Sulaymān) smiled, amused at her words, and said: 'My Lord! Grant me to give thanks for Your blessings which You have blessed me and my parents with; and that I may do righteous deeds which please You; and admit me by Your Mercy (to be) among Your righteous servants.' [2]

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Anbiyā' (21), Verse 81.
2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Naml (27), Verse 19.

The Noble Qur'ān presents Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ as a wise and just leader, who was appointed by Allah ﷻ. The story of this Prophet emphasizes to us that in Islam, there is no distinction between religion and state (or government). Allah ﷻ uses the example of Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ and the story of the ants, as well as the story of the throne of Bilqīs to show that no matter how powerful a leader becomes, they must always remember to:

1. Be subservient to Allah ﷻ.
2. Not use their power to suppress or oppress their subjects (as in the story of the ants).
3. Always be just and fair in dealings with their subjects (as in the story of the people of Saba').
4. Do not ever be arrogant, rather know that it is Allah ﷻ who grants such positions to whomever He Wills.

When we look at the world around us, it is important to examine modern-day leaders through the lens of these four criteria. If they do not meet these criteria, then it should be immediately evident that we cannot accept them as leaders.

THE POSITION OF GOVERNMENT IN ISLAM

As stated earlier, in Islam there is no distinction or separation between religion and state. Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ was granted absolute dominion over not only the physical subjects, but also supernatural subjects such as the *Jinn*. He was not only a religious leader, but also the political leader of his community, just like Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was at his time. The natural order of this world is such that Allah ﷻ grants the most perfect human being at any one time, complete dominion over **all** of His creatures. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qur'ān:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلاَئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُواْ أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاء وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

And when your Lord said to the angels: 'Indeed, I am going to place a vicegerent on the earth,' they said: 'Will You place someone upon it who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your sanctity?' He (Allah) said: 'Indeed I know what you do not know.'[3]

The natural order of this world is such that Allah ﷻ grants the most perfect human being at any one time, complete dominion over all of His creatures.

This leadership or vicegerent is not only chosen by Allah ﷻ, but they are granted complete dominion over the entire universe including the social, economic, moral, religious, and psychological aspects of human beings. Today, this representative *(khalīfah)* or proof *(ḥujjah)* is Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه.

3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 30.

Activity 3.1a: Scenarios

Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ was not only the religious leader, but he was also the political leader of his community just like the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was during his time. Create two scenarios describing the following situations:

1. A community governed with no religion.

2. A community governed with no distinction between religion and state.

In recent times, the debate over whether religion should interfere in the affairs of the state has erupted. Usually ignorance of the principles of Islam leads some people to propagate secular notions that religious affairs should be kept separate from state affairs.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, create a digital presentation on the debate about whether religion should interfere with the affairs of the state or not. State your main argument, and within your presentation show evidence from the Noble Qurʾān, as well as *aḥādīth* to support your position.

In Islam, aside from historical precedents set by the likes of Prophet Dawūd ﷺ, Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ, our Noble Prophet ﷺ, and Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, we can also consider the following points which demonstrate the inseparability of state and religion in Islam:

1. The Rule belongs Solely to Allah ﷻ

As Muslims, we all believe that Allah, the Exalted, is our Creator, Nurturer, and Guide. He is All-Knowing in regard to what benefits His creations and slaves in their worldly and religious affairs.

Therefore, human beings must submit to Allah ﷻ in everything, and know that His Divine legislation and just, wise laws are for the benefit of people in all stages of their lives. Allah ﷻ, the Exalted, says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُم بِهِ مَا عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلاَّ لِلّهِ يَقُصُّ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ ۝

Say: 'Indeed, I stand on a manifest proof from my Lord, and you have denied it. What you seek to hasten is not up to me. Judgment belongs only to Allah; He expounds the truth and He is the Best of Deciders.'[4]

2. Islamic Jurisprudence is the Constitution for Life which Includes Government

Islamic Jurisprudence is not a set of individual rules for only ritual acts of worship, but rather, it includes the guidelines on how to live in all aspects of one's life. This includes rules of government as well. It encompasses financial laws, civil laws (such as marriage and divorce), military laws, judicial laws, and many others. Thus, Islamic Jurisprudence is the Constitution for an Islamic Government in its entirety.

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 57.

3. Islamic Government is a Necessary Part of an Islamic Society

The endurance of Islamic Jurisprudence naturally requires there to be an Islamic Government which ensures that Islamic Jurisprudence is put into practice, and that it takes up the role of implementing the laws. Otherwise, the Divine Laws will be overlooked, as is the current situation in many countries which are 'Islamic' by name.

4. Necessity of Appointing a Leader who will Implement the Islamic Laws

Since we need an Islamic Government, we also need a trusted ruler who is well versed in the Divine Laws so they can implement them.

The Islamic ruler must be the most knowledgeable among the people about the Laws of Allah ﷻ, and the most just amongst the Muslims. Of course, when an immaculate Imām is present, then obviously, he is the only one who can be the leader.

5. It is not Permissible to Suspend Divine Laws in the Era of Occultation

During the occultation of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه الشريف, who should implement the Laws of Islam and rule by Allah's command?

There is no doubt that the Laws of Islam will continue until the Day of Resurrection—they are not somehow 'put on hold' until Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله فرجه الشريف reappears. Otherwise, it would mean that the greater period of time was excluded from these laws. It would also lead to the spread of sins and corruption during the occultation, and this is definitely something that Allah ﷻ does not want. Often two opinions are followed by the greater society:

1. Ignore Governance, but this would mean ignoring something that is important, i.e. Islamic Government, which people need in order to organize their worldly life and the Hereafter.
2. Allah ﷻ leaves it to the community to run their own affairs as they see fit, according to democracy, dictatorship, or any other doctrine that is popular at the time.

Obviously, both of these options are invalid, because an important need of the Muslim community is ignored. Which need is greater than the need for the most knowledgeable one (in the Laws of Allah), and a just person to manage the affairs of the community and maintain the order of the Muslim lands during the occultation, while maintaining and implementing the Islamic Laws?

Therefore, the only option is to have an Islamic Government. This government must be led by the most knowledgeable scholar of the time, who does his best to establish the Laws of Islam in the land.

A crucial point to remember is that Islam and government are not separate, they go hand in hand. This is one of the most important lessons we can learn from the life of Prophet Sulaymān عليه السلام.

Activity 3.1b: Review Questions

1. How did Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ teach us about Divine Laws and government?

2. Can we say that since we are in occultation, we do not have to follow the concept of an Islamic Government? Why or why not?

3. If a *ḥadīth* contradicts the Noble Qurʾān, is it reliable? Why or why not?

4. Explain how politics and government are a part of religion. Remember that within Islam, politics has more to do with guidance than power.

5. Explain in your own words "What is a just ruler?" Who appoints such a person?

3.2 Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn and understand the story of Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام from the Noble Qurʾān.
- Demonstrate how Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام maintained his chastity during hardships.
- Understand some research skills from the Noble Qurʾān.

The story of Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام is detailed by Allah ﷻ in Chapter 12 of the Noble Qur'ān which is entitled Sūrah Yūsuf. It is a unique chapter of the Qur'ān in that it is the only story that has been revealed chronologically in its entirety about this Prophet عليه السلام—all in one place.

It is only in this chapter that Allah ﷻ praises His revelation as *Aḥsan al-Qaṣaṣ*[1] which means "The best of stories or narrations," perhaps referring to all of the stories in the Noble Qurʾān; or as some commentators have said that this reference is to the story of Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام.

PROPHET YŪSUF عليه السلام

After the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام threw him into a well and left him to die, a group of travelers found him and took him to Egypt to sell him as a slave. The minister bought him, so he grew up as a slave in the palace of a government official. He matured into a very handsome and attractive young man with great charm, and because of this, everyone loved him.

Like all of the previous Prophets عليهم السلام, Allah ﷻ blessed him with special knowledge and wisdom. True knowledge is not simply something that a person memorizes or understands from studying and learning—although these are necessary and important—rather, it is something that Allah ﷻ places into the hearts of those whom He wishes. These gifts empower those individuals to witness the hidden realities of actions performed in this world. If a person wants to be the recipient of such Divine gifts, then they need to become sincere doers of righteous actions, meaning that they perform good deeds solely for the sake of Allah ﷻ:

And when he (Yūsuf) attained his full manhood, We gave him wisdom and knowledge; thus, (this is how) We reward the doers of good.[2]

STOP AND REFLECT: What is true knowledge? Can a person who is not an immaculate being attain true knowledge?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 3.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 22.

As time passed and Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ grew into a mature man, the king's wife tried to trap Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ in a room so that she could seduce him, and she closed all of the doors behind him.

Then the minister's wife took a cloth and covered it over an idol that was in the room out of respect for her 'god.' Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ said to her:

> *'What about my Lord who is All-Watching?'*

She ran toward him, approaching him with ill-intent in an attempt to seduce him, but Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ ran away from her. He sincerely called out to Allah ﷻ in dire desperation:

> *'God forbid that this should occur! Indeed, He is my Master.'*[3]

Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ refrained from even casting a glance at her. With the special knowledge that he had been endowed with, Yūsuf ﷺ 'saw' the reality of this evil sin, and he witnessed the Glory and Might of Allah ﷻ, thus he was able to protect himself.

Whenever a servant calls upon Allah ﷻ sincerely for help, the Almighty will respond to them. Allah ﷻ dispelled the evil plot of the wife of the minister from Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ. If we pay close attention to the wordings of the Noble Qurʾān, we will notice that because of Yūsuf's pure and sincere plea for help, Allah ﷻ caused the evil desires and indecency to turn away from him, instead of Yūsuf ﷺ being removed from the evil. The latter is a higher degree of Divine protection:

...So, it was that We might avert from him all evil and indecency. Indeed, he was one of Our sincere servants.[4]

Just at that time the minister appeared at the scene and got an idea of what had transpired. The king's wife became frightened. She immediately tried to rid herself of any fault by pouring all of the blame on Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ even though he was completely innocent.

Due to the fact that Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ 'disobeyed' the minister's wife and did not give in to her temptations, she found a way to punish him and had him thrown into a prison which had terrible conditions. However, Yūsuf ﷺ did not complain about this, rather he prayed to his Lord as follows:

> *'My Lord! Prison is dearer to me than that to which they (the women) invite me to. Unless You (O Allah), turn away their plot from me, I might feel inclined toward them and be among the ignorant ones.'*[5]

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 23.

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 24.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 33.

The story of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ can teach us many moral lessons. One of these focuses on the fact that we should always be chaste and modest—even in the most difficult situations.

We must be aware that any relationships which are not based on chastity, and permissibility according to the Laws of Islam are forbidden. We know from the Noble Qur'ān that Zulaykhah (the wife of the minister) was a beautiful woman, and she came forward and declared her love for Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ; however, she was a married woman and Yūsuf ﷺ would never even think about engaging in any illicit relationship. After being spoken about in the community and looked down upon, Zulaykhah invited the other women of Egypt to come to a party to parade Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ in front of them. The Qur'ān depicts this story as follows:

> *So when she heard about their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a banquet for them. Then she gave each one of them a knife, and said to him (Yūsuf): 'Come forth before them.' And when they saw him, they extolled him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands and said (exclaimed): 'Perfect is Allah! This is not a human being; this is none but a noble angel!'* [6]

Despite all of the scandals which surrounded him, Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ remained steadfast in the path of Allah ﷻ and his worship of the Almighty. He refused the advances of the many beautiful women who attempted to seduce him, and preferred to be jailed in order to remain chaste and stay close to Allah ﷻ. This story gives us the profound message that despite hardships, we have to remain chaste and modest.

PROPHET YŪSUF ﷺ WAS IMPRISONED

Allah ﷻ rescued Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ from the evil plots of those women by responding to his prayer, and he was imprisoned. Despite being thrown into jail for a crime he did not even commit, this great Prophet ﷺ did not dwell on his past. He did not complain about the injustices that were done to him by his brothers, or the caravan that sold him as a slave, or even now by the minister's wife. Instead, he immediately began to preach the message about the Oneness of Allah to his fellow inmates. It was only a matter of time before Yūsuf's words and his immaculate character touched the hearts of the prisoners. They exclaimed:

'…Verily, we consider you (Yūsuf) as one of the doers of good…' [7]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What can we learn from the imprisonment of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ? How can we apply this lesson to waiting for our Imām عجل الله فرجه؟ Discuss with a partner, and be prepared to share your answer with the class.

Yūsuf ﷺ remained in prison for several years until he was eventually released by the king. The king heard about Yūsuf's special dream-interpreting abilities, and he desperately needed this service.[8]

Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ interpreted the king's complex dream in a way that no other person could explain it.

The king was so amazed by the interpretation that he then appointed Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ as his minister in his government—as per his own request. Such was this great Prophet's journey. Allah ﷻ rescued him from the depths of the well, then placed him into the seat of the minister of Egypt.

6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yūsuf, (12), Verse 31.

7 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 36.

8 There are many stories of Allah ﷻ granting youth who had controlled their low desires the special ability of being able to interpret dreams. Amongst these youth was Ibn Sirīn.

Activity 3.2a: Graphic Organizer

Complete the graphic organizer below mentioning some moral lessons that we can learn from the story of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ which are found in Chapter 12 (Sūrah Yūsuf) of the Noble Qurʾān.

MORAL LESSON TO LEARN	REFERENCE OF THE VERSE	APPLICATION TO TODAY'S SOCIETY

Activity 3.2b: Review Questions

1. According to the Noble Qurʾān, what was the secret to Prophet Yūsuf's success?

2. Mention another moral lesson from the story of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ besides the lesson of chastity.

3. Why did Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ prefer to be imprisoned rather than be 'free' outside?

4. How did Allah ﷻ elevate the position of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ? What happened?

CHAPTER 4

Contemporary Muslims

4.1 Islamic Scholars of the Golden Age

4.1 Islamic Scholars of the Golden Age

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain how studying the world can be viewed as the study of Divine signs.
- Explore different Islamic scientists, and the role they play in modern academia up until today.

Historically, within the Islamic intellectual tradition, there has never been a division of knowledge into secular and religious. Rather, the seeking of beneficial knowledge was and is considered a responsibility of every Muslim according to their means and ability. The Prophet ﷺ has been widely reported to have said:

> "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman." [1]

STOP AND REFLECT: How can seeking knowledge, even secular, help us in our religion and faith?

> "Verily, the angels spread their wings for the seekers of knowledge out of delight."
>
> – The Noble Prophet ﷺ

Even the study of medicine, astronomy, or other sciences when viewed as the study of Divine signs indicating a greater reality can serve to increase one's knowledge of Allah ﷻ, certainty in the belief of Him, and the Day of Reckoning. Moreover, when a person seeks knowledge for the sake of Allah's pleasure, or uses one's knowledge to benefit His creations, or earn a lawful livelihood, then the very act of seeking knowledge becomes an act of worship.

Thus, the words of the Prophet ﷺ will apply to them where he said: "A person who proceeds on a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make them proceed therewith on a path toward the Garden." [2] He also said: "Verily, the angels spread their wings for the seekers of knowledge out of delight." [3]

In contrast, it should be noted that if the goal of seeking knowledge is something other than what has been mentioned, then one will indeed be deprived of this lofty station.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Does intentional goal-setting have value when it comes to scientific studies? How can we ensure that our daily activities become worship for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ?

1 Ḥillī, Warrām, *Tanbīh al-Khawāṭir wa Nuzhat an-Nawāẓir,* Vol. 2, P. 176; Shaykh Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī,* Vol. 1, P. 30; ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 67, P. 68.

2 Pāyāndeh, Abūl Qāsim, *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah,* Vol. 1, P. 699, Ḥadith #2636.

3 *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah,* Vol. 1, P. 217, Ḥadith #324.

ISLAMIC SCHOLARS' CONTRIBUTIONS OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Throughout history, we find that some scholars who were renowned for their contributions to the study of medicine, architecture, mathematics, and other sciences, were also accomplished scholars of Islam. Some even held the highest religious offices of their day. To explore this phenomenon, we will briefly examine the life and times of some of these remarkable people.

STOP AND REFLECT: How many historical Muslim scientists can you think of who have contributed to various fields?

1 Jābir ibn Ḥayyān
(b. 721 AD – d. 815 AD)

Jābir ibn Ḥayyān was born in the city of Tus, in present-day Iran, but he later moved to Kūfah, Iraq, where he gained fame under the Abbasid caliphate. Jābir's contributions to the field of alchemy were monumental—he wrote numerous texts on this subject, many of which outlined processes like distillation, crystallization, and the use of acids—foundations that later influenced modern chemistry. His works also delved into various branches of science, including medicine, astronomy, and even philosophy, which made him a key figure in the development of Islamic Sciences.

Jābir's writings—often attributed to him in both Arabic and later Latin translations—played a crucial role in the transmission of alchemical knowledge to medieval Europe. His approach to alchemy was notably systematic, blending experimentation with theoretical knowledge, which was unusual during his time. The Jabirian Corpus, a collection of several thousand treatises attributed to him, contains a wealth of knowledge that profoundly impacted both Islamic and European Science for centuries. His influence extended beyond alchemy into broader areas of thought, making him a pivotal figure in the history of science.

Jābir ibn Ḥayyān was one of the students of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ who continued the school established by Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ. Most reports suggest that he spent the end of his life living in secrecy during the caliphate of Hārūn ar-Rashīd, and that he died in Kūfah during the caliphate of Maʾmūn.

2 Ibn al-Haytham
(b. 965 AD – d. 1040 AD)

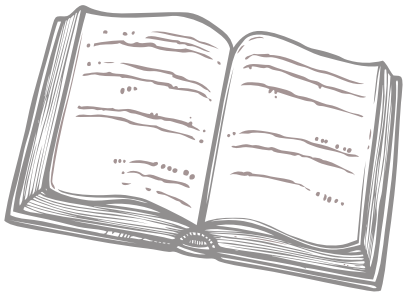
Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham, more commonly known as **Ibn al-Haytham**, was a prominent mathematician and astronomer who was born in Baṣrah, Iraq. He was one of the few people of his time who was educated at a religious center in Baṣrah with a focus on religious practices, as well as formal education. His work focused on the understanding of optics and light; however, he also made notable findings in the fields of anatomy, engineering, medicine, philosophy, psychology, and other areas. His research methodologies resemble what modern-day scientists call the Scientific Method, and as a result, he is often termed the **First Scientist**.

Ibn al-Haytham went to Cairo, Egypt, in what he hoped would be a turning point in his career to regulate the Nile River. However, he soon learned that this was impractical, and in fear of the caliph of the time, he faked madness and was confined to his home until the caliph's death. It was during this time that his most famous work, *Kitāb al-Manāẓir (The Book of Optics),* was written. In addition to this book, he also authored close to 100 books, unfortunately however, only about 55 survived.

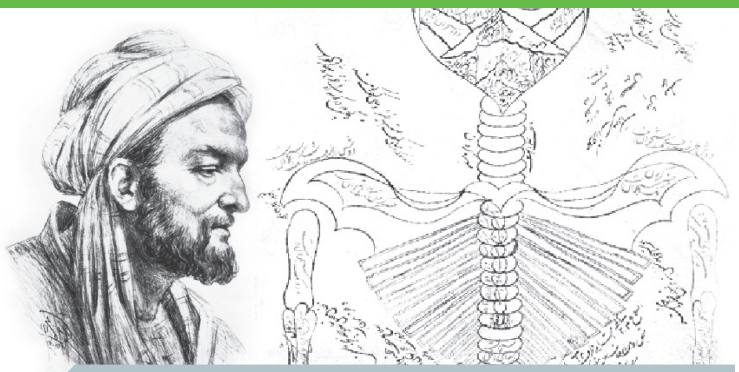
As a religious scholar, he worked immensely to understand the differences between the Ahlus Sunnah and Shīʿah sects, as well as others, in hopes that it would bring him closer to Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: How did Ibn al-Haytham show dedication to Islam as a pathway to scientific discoveries?

3 Thābit ibn Qurrah
(b. 836 AD – d. 901 AD)



Al-Ṣābi' Thābit ibn Qurrah al-Ḥarrānī, more commonly known as **Thābit ibn Qurrah**, was born in Syria, in a city called Ḥarrān. He is famously known for his works in mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, and medicine, but was also considered a representative of Islamic culture during his time. One of his most prominent scientific works was his findings on gravity—well before Isaac Newton.



4 Ibn Sīnā / Avicenna
(b.980 AD – d.1037 AD)

Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Sīnā, more commonly known as **Ibn Sīnā or Avicenna,** was born near Bukhārā, then part of the Sāmānid Empire which was a center of Islamic learning and Persianate culture. He was a polymath, and excelled in not only medicine and astronomy, but also philosophy and theology, in addition to having authored hundreds of works.

In the Muslim world, he is remembered mostly for his contributions to philosophy and theology, and his works are studied to this day. His monumental work, *Kitāb ash-Shifāʾ (The Book of Healing),* forms the main source of his philosophical and theological teachings, and is actually an encyclopedic work discussing everything from chemistry, mathematics, and astronomy to philosophy, theology, and logic. The nature of this work exemplifies the Islamic Worldview regarding knowledge, with no distinction made between the spiritual and the material.

In Europe however, Ibn Sīnā is mainly known for his contributions to medicine, and is considered by most to be the **Father of Early Modern Medicine**. In fact, his book, *Al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb (The Canon of Medicine),* was studied in the East and the West as a primary medical text longer than any other in history. This is quite remarkable, especially considering that Ibn Sīnā wrote the book before he even turned the age of 21.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to note that the nature of Ibn Sīnā's work made no distinction between spiritual or material knowledge?

POLYMATH: a person of wide-ranging knowledge or learning

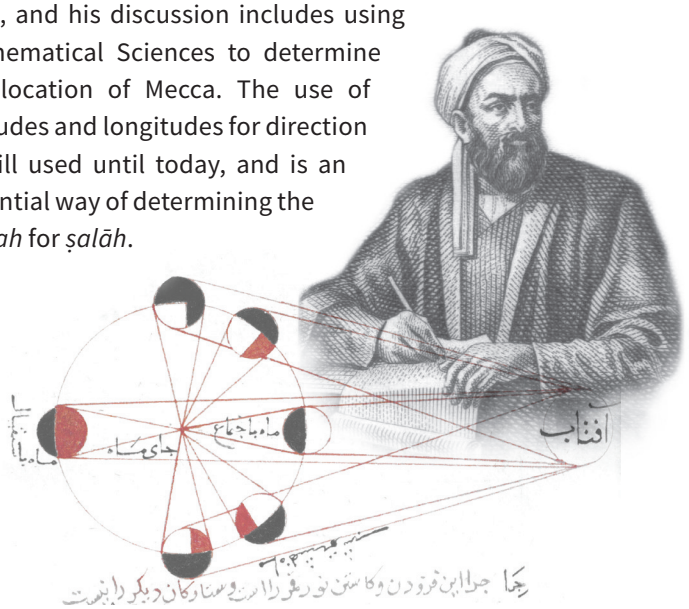
5 Al-Bīrūnī
(b. 973 AD – d. 1052 AD)

Abū Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī was born in Khawārizm, present day Uzbekistan, during a period of great turmoil in the Islamic world. During his lifetime, he served under six different princes, and was educated by a Khawārizm-Shāh prince. Despite the little that is known of his early life and the political turmoil during that time, **al-Bīrūnī** was one of the original polymaths, and excelled as an astronomer, mathematician, ethnographist, anthropologist, historian, and geographer.

After a civil war broke out amongst the Khawārizm Shāhs, al-Bīrūnī was forced to seek support from the Sāmānid Empire and met Qābūs ibn Vushmgīr, which eventually led him to meet Ibn Sīnā and share philosophical ideas. He spent much of his life evading wars and traveling, but through his travels made it a point to pen his observations for which he is known today.

Al-Bīrūnī's most famous work is *Taḥqīq mā lil Hind min Maqūlah Maqbūlah fī al-ʿAql aw Mardhūlah (An Encyclopedic Work on the Science, Religion, Literature, and Way of Life in India)* which allowed him to become known as the anthropologist and historian that he is today. Al-Bīrūnī is known for many other academic texts in his fields of expertise, but overall, only 22 of his 146 authored titles survived and have been published.

Another one of Al-Bīrūnī's books on Mathematical Geography discusses the importance of using latitudes and longitudes on land, and his discussion includes using Mathematical Sciences to determine the location of Mecca. The use of latitudes and longitudes for direction is still used until today, and is an essential way of determining the *Qiblah* for *ṣalāh*.



6 Shaykh Bahāʾī
(b.1547 AD – d.1621 AD)

Bahāʾ ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-ʿĀmilī, better known as **Shaykh Bahāʾī**, was born in a village in southern Lebanon, in the vicinity of Jabal ʿĀmil, and migrated to Iran with his father—also a renowned scholar—at an early age. Aside from being a prolific writer—having authored over 100 treatises and books on a variety of subjects ranging from mathematics to astronomy, Islamic Jurisprudence, architecture, and engineering—he was also a renowned scholar of Islam.

During the reign of Shāh ʿAbbās, he was appointed as Shaykh al-Islam of Iṣfahān, which was considered to be the highest religious office at that time. This was while Iṣfahān was the Ṣafavīd capital and home to some of the most renowned scholars of that age. Aside from his obvious accomplishments in Islamic Jurisprudence, he was also considered—along with his contemporary, Mīr Dāmād—to be instrumental in the development of Islamic Philosophy. Among his students were the highly influential Mullāh Ṣadrā Shirāzī and Mullāh Fayẓ Kāshānī.

Interestingly, the city of Iṣfahān itself is a testament to the geniusness of Shaykh Bahāʾī. When Shāh ʿAbbās decided to move his capital from Qazvīn to Iṣfahān and intended to remake the city itself, the responsibility for urban planning was given to Shaykh Bahāʾī. Many monuments of the city—like the bathroom *(ḥammam)* of Shaykh Bahāʾī which was reportedly heated by only a single candle; the sundials of Masjid-e Shāh, now known as Masjid-e Imām; and the Shrine of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ—were all attributed to Shaykh Bahāʾī. He is also credited with designing the courtyards of the shrine of our eighth Imām ﷺ in the shape of hexagons; as well as having developed a complex network of irrigation canals to utilize the life-giving waters of Iṣfahān's Zāyandeh River. This is but a glimpse into the erudition and attainments of the venerable Shaykh, whose grave is located in the Shrine of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ.

ACTIVITY: Research landmark pictures of Iṣfahān and use them to analyze the holistic way in which Shaykh Bahāʾī aimed to reform the city of Iṣfahān.

7 ʿAllāmah Ḥasanzādeh ʿĀmolī
(b. 1929 AD – d. 2021 AD)

Ḥasan Ḥasanzādeh ʿĀmolī, known as **ʿAllāmah Ḥasanzādeh ʿĀmolī**, was one of the most prominent Islamic scholars of this past century. He was renowned—especially as a philosopher, a mystic, and a teacher. However, many are unaware that he was also an accomplished mathematician and astronomer. In fact, aside from the nearly 100 works he authored on Islamic Spirituality, Theology, and Philosophy, there are over 20 books he wrote on Mathematics and Astronomy. In addition to having mastered his native Persian language, he also mastered the Arabic and French languages as well. It is no wonder that upon his death it was said of him: "This learned, multidimensional religious scholar was among the unique and distinguished figures whose limited number in any era delights the eyes and hearts of those who knew them, and benefited from these scholars' knowledge, insight, reason, and soul."

Islamic Scholars have played a significant role in the development of Science, Mathematics, Geography, and many other subjects through their observations and works. Their findings are used in many modern day advances that we use today, such as cameras, and are proof that learning about the world helps us learn about the beauty of the world around us and Allah ﷻ. Many scientific concepts that are now being discovered by scientists today, were mentioned in Qurʾān and *aḥādīth* in the early years of Islam. With the right determination, we too can make significant contributions to the scientific world by using the knowledge we have in our sources, and pursuing advanced studies.

Activity 4.1a: Research and Write

This lesson mentions a few scholars from the Golden Age, however it was a period of great learning and there are many more scholars who contributed to the cultural, economical, and scientific discoveries of the world. Your goal is to research one more Golden Age Scholar who is not mentioned in this lesson. Be sure to include the following information:

- Birth Year
- Place of Birth
- Death Year
- Place of Death
- How they demonstrated true faith in Allah ﷻ
- Subjects they were experts in
- Their most famous piece(s) of work
- Turning points in their career

Use the rubric below to help you in compiling your findings.

	1 **Ineffective**	**2** **Somewhat Effective**	**3** **Considerably Effective**	**4** **Highly Effective**
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Focus and Details	The topic and main ideas were not too clear.	The main idea was somewhat clear, but lacked supporting evidence.	The main idea was very clear, however supporting evidence and details were lacking.	There was a clear and focused main idea, supported by ample detail and evidence.
Intent	Author's intent of writing was not apparent.	Author intent was somewhat apparent, but left the readers with many questions.	Author's intent was strong with a clear purpose, but left the readers with some questions.	Author's intent and knowledge on the topic was strong, and fully addressed the readers' questions.
Accuracy	Content presented was not accurate or compelling.	Content presented contained some misinformation and lacked quality.	Content presented was mostly accurate, and demonstrated some quality work.	Content presented was extremely accurate and demonstrated quality work.
Teacher's Comments				

Activity 4.1b: Modern Day Connections

In this lesson, we were presented with many findings from Islamic scholars who served as the basis for future scientific discoveries. Work with a partner or group to research more in depth the work of one scientist mentioned in this lesson, and find 2-3 ways in which their work has contributed to our world today. Complete the worksheet below to demonstrate your research.

For example: Ibn al-Haytham's findings on optics were the baseline for many of the cameras we use today.

Modern Day Connections Worksheet

Name of Islamic Golden Age Scholar: _____

Subjects they were known for studying:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Additional research on their academic work:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sources:

Modern Day Inventions connected to their findings:

Activity 4.1b: Modern Day Connections (Continued)

Independent Reflection Component: Think about how these inventions impact our life overall. Why is it so important to learn about not only the religious work of Islamic scholars, but also their academic works?

AKHLĀQ
(ETIQUETTE)

CHAPTER 1

Mind, Body and Soul

1.1 Practically Achieving Our Purpose
1.2 Worship at a Deeper Level - Part 1
1.3 Worship at a Deeper Level - Part 2
1.4 Despair and Hope in Trying Times

1.1 Practically Achieving Our Purpose

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand what the *Science of Akhlāq* is about, its importance, and the two main areas it is concerned with.
- Understand the role of repetitious actions in order to be able to develop good characteristics, and omit bad qualities.
- Explain, at a basic level, the struggle between the internal forces of the soul.
- Define *Jihādun Nafs* and explain its connection to *akhlāq*.
- Reflect on a practical strategy for *Jihādun Nafs.*

AKHLĀQ (ISLAMIC ETHICS)

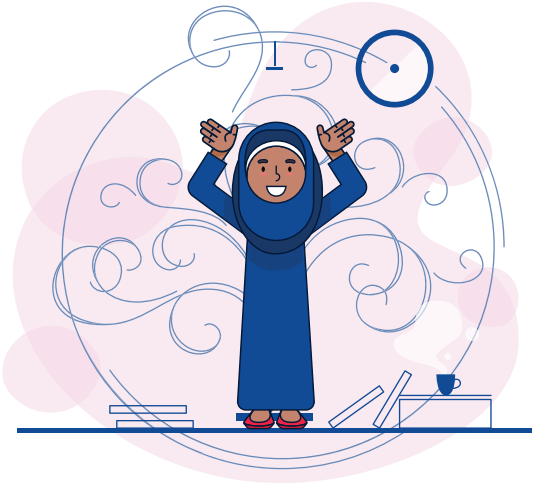
STOP AND REFLECT: Describe a situation that represents good *akhlāq* to you.

The word *'akhlāq'* in Arabic is the plural of the word *'khulq.' Khulq* is an 'internal state or characteristic of a human being.' It is different from *'khalq'* which refers to the 'outer shape or characteristics of a human being.'

STOP AND REFLECT: Refer to your answer above. Based on these two different terms of *akhlāq,* what would you identify the situation you mentioned as? Why?

In society, people tend to make shallow judgments about others on the basis of their physical appearance (their *khalq*). Those who are considered to have the best appearances often make the headlines.

However, Islam teaches us that 'true value' is what lies within a person, and that by attaining the best of *akhlāq*, we can become closer to Allah ﷻ, and also find a way into the hearts of others through our behavior, manners, and interactions.



We have some control over our physical appearance. For example, our efforts in eating well, sleeping well, exercising, and leading a wholesome lifestyle can play a part in enhancing our physical beauty. However, we have been given much more control over our spiritual component *(akhlāq)*, which means that our inner beauty can be significantly enhanced by developing good characteristics and unrooting evil traits.

In Islamic Sciences, the 'Study of *Akhlāq'* is concerned with:

1. Understanding what internal characteristics are good and what are bad.
2. Learning strategies for acquiring good characteristics and staying away from bad ones.

In Islam, both the outer form and the inner spirit are essential; therefore, the Study of *Aḥkām* (Jurisprudential Laws and Rules regarding the physical aspect), and the Study of *Akhlāq* are both of extreme importance.

Activity 1.1a: Khalq vs. Khulq

Fill in the following chart to contrast *khalq* and *khulq*. The first few are completed for you as examples.

KHALQ	KHULQ
Physical height	How humble or arrogant one is toward others
A smile	Generosity toward others
Physical strength	Willpower to resist sin

1. Which one does Islam value more, the inner or the outer aspect? Explain your answer.

2. How can someone develop an internal characteristic? For example, how does a person become a 'generous' individual?

3. What are some factors that may change your traits or characteristics for the better or the worse?

There are different factors which determine our internal characteristics *(akhlāq)*: our family, friends, society, education, and role models. We are heavily influenced by these factors. However, we do not believe that just because we are born in a certain environment, we are forced to become like the people around us. We also know that we can choose who we want to have as our closest friends.

It is possible to change the type of *akhlāq* we have. Someone who has good characteristics can take on bad ones, or vice-versa. The most important factor is our own efforts and motivation. If someone has the desire to have good *akhlāq*, then one will try very hard and make a sincere effort to overcome the challenges of their environment—with the help of Allah ﷻ.

We see this in the example of Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ, who was a highway robber at the time of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ. He claimed to be a Muslim, but continued robbing people. One day, when he was able to climb over a wall to steal a girl that he saw and liked, Fuḍayl heard someone reciting the following verse from the Qurʾān: *"Has not the time come for those who believe that their hearts should become humbly submissive in the remembrance of Allah and what has been revealed (to them) of the truth? And that they should not become like those who were given the Scripture before, but long periods (of time) passed over them and their hearts hardened? And many among them are rebellious transgressors."* [1]

Upon hearing this, Fuḍayl realized his own hypocrisy and decided to reform himself. He tried to find his prior victims and compensated them for robbing their belongings. After he ran out of money to repay them, he began to work various jobs to try and give people their properties back. Eventually, he ended up studying under Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ and died as a scholar.[2]

STOP AND REFLECT: How do I know when I have internalized a good characteristic such that it has become part of my internal being? Is it possible to know this without interacting with other people?

When a person internalizes a certain characteristic, it becomes easy for them to act according to that characteristic. For example, an individual knows that generosity is a good thing, but one may have trouble actualizing this trait within oneself. One way this can be dealt with is to intentionally and consistently perform small acts of generosity, whether it be with one's time, knowledge, finances, or something else.

ACHIEVING OUR PURPOSE

In order to develop good characteristics and get rid of bad ones, we need to understand more about how Allah ﷻ made our internal state. Within ourselves (our souls), there are certain forces that compete with one another to take control over us. These forces can be used for good, but they can also be employed for evil. The Qurʾān describes the presence of these forces in Sūrah ash-Shams as follows:

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57), Verse 16.
2 Ibn Khallakān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa-Anbāʾ Abnāʾ az-Zamān*, Vol. 4, P. 47.

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَىٰهَا

"And (by the) soul and He who fashioned it; and inspired it (the soul) with (the discernment between) its vices (wickedness) and its virtues (righteousness)." [3]

In order to develop virtuous qualities, we need to identify the forces that are used for evil, then steer them toward performing righteous actions.

Two of these forces are *shahwah* (desires) and *ghaḍab* (anger). *Shahwah* is the name given to 'the force inside of us that is inclined toward beautiful and appealing things.' *Ghaḍab* is the name given to 'the force within us that wants to escape from and repel difficult, harmful, and unpleasant things.'

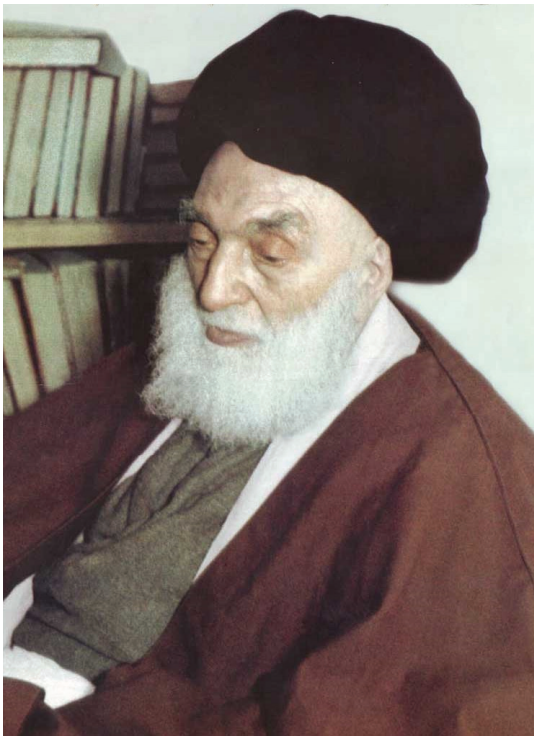
Allah ﷻ created these forces in every human soul for a reason. They can be used for very good and necessary purposes, like eating food to stay alive, or getting married and having children, or fighting off an attacker, etc. But they can also be used to pull us in the wrong direction if they are not used correctly, like breaking up a friendship between two people due to jealousy, or oppressing someone, or satisfying forbidden lusts with individuals that it is not permissible to be intimate with, etc. Eventually, they can take us over and consume us if we are not careful in regard to them. Shayṭān also tricks and tempts us by means of these forces.

Life is meant to be a struggle where we gain control over these forces with another force that is stronger than them which Allah ﷻ has given us by the name of *'ʿaql'*, or the 'power of the intellect.' With our *ʿaql*, we can control the forces of *shahwah* and *ghaḍab,* and use them in the appropriate way that Allah ﷻ placed them within us for, and so we can worship the Almighty in the best possible way. This intense, prolonged, and continuous struggle is called *'jihād'* in Arabic—not the smaller *jihād (Jihādul Aṣghar)* of the battlefield, but rather the greater *jihād (Jihādul Akbar)*, which is the struggle to tame and control the forces of the self that can move someone toward evil.

Let us take a look at the example of a great scholar from recent history who was committed to being victorious in the major *jihād*.

ĀYATULLĀH BORŪJERDĪ

Āyatullāh Borūjerdī, an exceptional *marjaʿ,* who lived from 1875-1961, had made a vow that if he ever said something in anger, he would fast for an entire year. After studying for many years, he became a famous scholar and teacher in the Islamic Seminary *(Ḥawzah)*. One day, while he was teaching a class in his hometown of Borūjerd, a student began to interrupt his lesson. Āyatullāh Borūjerdī answered two questions from this student, but when he raised a third objection, Āyatullāh Borūjerdī became momentarily angry and with an annoyed tone, he said: *"Be quiet, young man!"*



However, he soon realized what he had done. When Āyatullāh Borūjerdī finished his class, he called that student, and in front of the whole class, he bowed and kissed that student's hand.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shams (91), Verses 7-8.

He gifted him with a cloak and some money, then asked for his forgiveness, saying: *"Forgive my mistake! I do not understand how the reins of my soul slipped from my hands, and why I asked you to be quiet in front of everyone."*

From the very next day, Āyatullāh Borūjerdī began to fast because he had promised Allah ﷻ that he would fast for one year if he made such a mistake.[4]

This story of Āyatullāh Borūjerdī is an example of someone going through extreme lengths to gain mastery over their internal forces, and to perfect their *akhlāq*. This story is very inspiring and thought-provoking. For most people who are trying to improve their internal self, it is not advisable to go to the extent of making a vow to do something in case they slip up. Rather, by being vigilant over ourselves, regularly reviewing our actions, thanking Allah ﷻ for the good that we do, and seeking His forgiveness for all of our evil deeds, Allah ﷻ will help us to steadily improve ourselves.

INTENSITY OF TRAITS

STOP AND REFLECT: Is it the case that people either have a good characteristic or not? For example, are there people who are not brave, generous, or compassionate at all? Or can there be different levels of intensity that someone can have of a particular quality?

For all good and bad traits, people can possess them at various levels of intensity.

As an example, let us take the trait of 'loving Allah ﷻ.' Love of Allah ﷻ can be present at different levels. Depending on what level a person is at, they will demonstrate a particular level of servitude to Allah ﷻ. If people love Allah ﷻ at a basic level where they understand that He created them and gave them everything that they have, then their love for Allah ﷻ will slowly increase, and they will then at least do all of their obligatory actions *(wājibāt),* and not cross the red line into the impermissible or forbidden things *(muḥarramāt).*

Doing these actions repeatedly (staying away from the forbidden and performing the obligatory things) will create an even stronger love in one's heart for Allah ﷻ, which will then make an individual want to serve Him in a stronger way. At that point, one will not be content with just doing the bare minimum; a person will **want** to do much more than that. For someone who has developed this love of Allah ﷻ, it is a great pleasure to be able to converse with the Almighty and pray to Him. That is why we see that the truest pleasure and passion of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ and their closest followers was in worshiping and conversing with Allah ﷻ. On the other hand, for a person who does not have love of Allah ﷻ, speaking to Him, or standing in prayer is very difficult and can appear to have little spiritual effect.

4 Jaffer, Abbas, *Lessons from the Lives of Ulema,* which can be found at this link: https://www.al-islam.org/lessons-lives-ulema.

Let us look at another example. If someone is very wealthy, and they have that minimum level of love in their heart for Allah ﷻ—but no more than that—then they will ensure that at the very least, they carry out their obligatory *(wājib)* financial duties such as *khums* and *zakāh*. They will also make sure that they do not spend any of their money on forbidden things *(ḥarām)*, and that their income comes from legitimate and permissible *(ḥalāl)* sources.

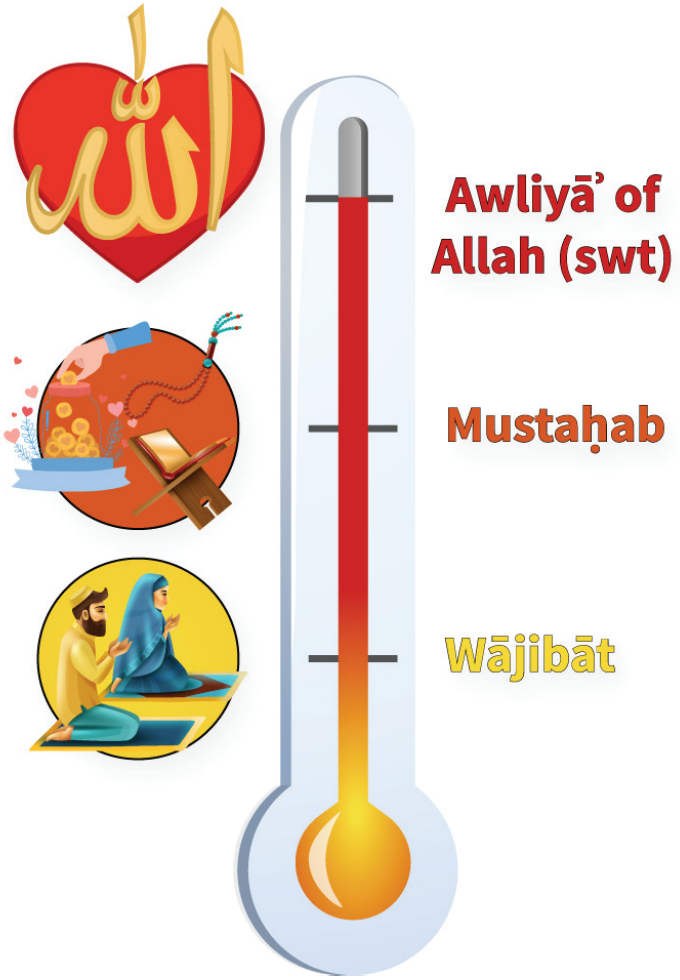
As a person's love for Allah ﷻ increases because of doing these actions repeatedly, one will want to do more than that—because the more you love someone, the more you want to do for them. One will realize that this wealth has been given to them for a purpose. They will spend on themselves as necessary, but beyond that, they will try to do something with the rest of their money that will make Allah ﷻ pleased with them.

If Allah ﷻ provides them with extra wealth, they will not be keen on buying extravagant mansions or deluxe luxury cars to show off or appease their lower desires. Instead, their love of Allah ﷻ will make them want to use their wealth for His sake and so they will do something with that extra money to help others in need or serve His cause—not serve themselves.

One of the ways we can work on our inner qualities is to focus on a specific set of traits. For example, suppose we would like to develop our *akhlāq* and improve our interaction with other people. Here are some practical steps we can take to accomplish this goal:

1. Make the intention at the beginning of the day, for example, after the *Fajr* prayer, to spend the day fulfilling our responsibilities to Allah ﷻ by treating others in the manner that He has instructed. This is called *mushāraṭah*, or 'committing to a plan of action.'
2. Throughout the day, we should be cognizant of our actions and continuously be mindful of what we are doing—this is referred to as *murāqabah* 'to ensure that the plan of action is being followed.'
3. At the end of the day, we should perform *muḥāsabah*, or self-accounting, which is 'to review how well we followed through with the plan of action.' At certain times, we might have forgotten to uphold the plan of action, or lost out to the forces within us and took a step in the wrong direction. If so, we should hold ourselves accountable, ask Allah for forgiveness, and also commit to seeking the forgiveness of anyone whose rights we violated. On the other hand, if we performed acts of goodness and followed the plan, we should thank Allah ﷻ.

In order to perform these three steps, it is helpful to first reflect on our own virtues, and try to fulfill our responsibilities throughout the day, which the activity at the end of this lesson will help us accomplish.



Activity 1.1b: Case Study

1. Imagine you are watching a movie. The main character is yourself, and the movie focuses on the highlights of the past week in your life. What virtues would you say you possess—naturally or due to nurture because of your upbringing?

   For example: Madiha remembers that she gave $50 to a charitable cause, and volunteered for three hours at a local community center and had a lot of fun in the process. When she thinks back, she cannot think of any ulterior motive for why she participated in that volunteer work. So, she might identify herself as a charitable person, and this is something she thanks Allah ﷻ for since it comes so naturally to her.

2. Now, go through the same scenario with the lens of improving yourself. What virtues do you not possess, which were perhaps demonstrated by some negative actions that you performed or good actions that you abandoned?

   For example, Madiha might remember that she yelled at a family member last Tuesday. She can identify she is prone to anger. As well, she feels that sometimes she puts on a show for others outside of the house, but acts differently when she is at home, and she recognizes that this is somewhat hypocritical.

   She also realizes that doing something just for the fun of it is different than doing things for the sake of Allah ﷻ. She wants her charity work to count more by purifying her intention. The next time she participates, she will do so even if it is not as fun, and she will still be happy knowing that it was for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ.

Now, fill out the chart below with some of the virtues that you have, and some that you do not possess but would like to develop, and then make an action plan on how you can improve your conduct.

VIRTUE OR LACK OF VIRTUE	EVENT/ACTION THAT HELPED IDENTIFY IT	PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT
Unwarranted anger	Yelling at a family member	• When I am angry, I will try to be more conscious of it, and not speak when I am in that state of anger. • I can leave the situation at that particular time.

Activity 1.1c: Review Questions

1. In your own words, summarize the difference between *khulq* and *khalq*. Give an example of each to justify your answer.

2. Look up Verse 159 of Sūrah Āl ʿImrān. Write down the translation. Based on this verse, list the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ that we should try to emulate.

3. In your own words, how can a person attempt to develop good characteristics in one's life?

4. Name an instance where the *akhlāq* of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ marked a turning point during the events of Karbalāʾ.

5. What is *murāqabah*? Give an example.

1.2 Worship at a Deeper Level - Part 1

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define *ṣalāh* beyond just a set of physical routines.
- Explore how our outlook on *ṣalāh* can change how we perform it.
- Analyze how proper prayer etiquette can help us strengthen our *ṣalāh* down the road.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw a person who was playing with his beard while praying. He said: *"If his heart was reverent and attentive, then his limbs would also be at rest."* [1]

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the connection between the outer actions we perform in *ṣalāh* and the inner state of our hearts?

Islamic Law teaches us precisely how our *ṣalāh* should look from the outer, physical perspective. However, the Qurʾān praises the *ṣalāh* of the *khāshiʿīn*—those who are humble and reverent as follows:

وَٱسْتَعِينُواْ بِٱلصَّبْرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۚ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلْخَٰشِعِينَ

"And seek assistance through patience and prayer, and it is indeed difficult except for the humble (and submissively reverent)." [2]

Based on this *āyah* and the *ḥadīth* above, we can see that *ṣalāh* is more than just a set of physical routines. Although the physical aspects of the *ṣalāh* are important and necessary in order for the *ṣalāh* to be correct, in order for the *ṣalāh* to be praiseworthy, it requires a certain state of heart.

How can we develop a correct state of heart in order to offer our *ṣalāh* with humility and reverence? Shaykh Panāhiān, one of the respected scholars of our time who resides in Qum, Iran, has discussed how to better understand *ṣalāh* in his book, *"How to Pray a Good Prayer."* He writes the following:

> *What should we do so that our life becomes sweet, and we will be able to live with sweetness and consequently serve Allah with sweetness? What should we do to not be so thirsty for enjoyments that we derive from any sin that we see, or imagine that we see? The answer is clear. If we nourish our spirit by worshiping Allah and remembering Him, then our lives will be full of vitality, happiness, and energy. It will become sweet with even the minimal blessings and gifts. The main need of us human beings is Allah Himself. Our main need is not the blessings that we want to get from Allah.*

We need God Himself, and we should get energy and life from Him directly. Otherwise, the battery of our spirit will become weak, and we will die, little by little. I mean, we will become dejected. The way that we can get energy directly from Allah is through "worshiping."

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 81, P. 228.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 45.

Worshiping is the connection of our soul to the Source of power and life. It regulates the veins of our spirit and nerves. Worshiping even has a good effect on our body. By worshiping, the cells of our body become kinder to us. This is because all of these cells love Allah and praise Him.[3]

Worshiping is the way to charge the soul to gain more power and vitality. Naturally, with worshiping, life and servitude will become sweeter. After worshiping well, a person will live more buoyantly, like a child who has gained enough calmness from his mother's embrace and is ready to experience life better. The Commander of the Faithful, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, said:

> "Constant attention in remembering Allah is the strength of souls."[4]

STOP AND REFLECT: After reading the above excerpt, why does the author say that with worship "life will become sweet with even minimal blessings and gifts"? What do you think the author means with the phrase "By worshiping, the cells of our body become kinder to us"? What benefits are we supposed to be getting when we worship?

3 Panāhiān, ʿAlī Riḍā, *How to Pray a Good Prayer,* Pp. 71-79 (with slight edits where needed).
4 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, P. 709.

Activity 1.2a: Analysis and Reflection

ANALYZE:

1. Why does the author say in the excerpt that with worship "life will become sweet with even minimal blessings and gifts"?

2. What do you think the author means with the phrase: "By worshiping, the cells of our body become kinder to us"?

3. What benefits are we supposed to be getting when we worship?

REFLECT:

1. How do you currently use your time for worship?

2. How can you improve how you use your time when it comes to how you worship?

FIRST STEPS TO A GOOD PRAYER

Sometimes, people think that you have to be perfect in your *ṣalāh,* or be in a specific mood to feel like the prayer matters. Shaykh Panāhiān addresses these misconceptions as follows:

A common belief about a good prayer is that a good prayer must be prayed with love—the type of prayer we have heard being described when talking about the special 'Vicegerents of Allah' (the *Awliyā'*). Many think that a good prayer is a prayer where you cry from the beginning to the end. They think you must have the fear of Allah and tremble because of this throughout the entire prayer.

[Yes, it is true that] the parts of their bodies would tremble due to their fear of Allah. They would also turn pale because of their enthusiasm for their Lord. But, for now we cannot pray like this. Maybe we will not be able to pray like this until the end of our life. Therefore, it is logical that a "good prayer" for us is a different kind of prayer.

We are still at the beginning of the way. Praying with love or praying with fear of Allah in our heart may not be achievable for us for right now. A person does not fear Allah five times a day that easily. Maybe we have not [really] feared Allah once in our whole life. Experiencing this verse: *"But as for those who feared their Lord…"* [5] is for the 'Vicegerents of Allah… [On the other hand], others do not put any effort and simply say: "If Allah wants, someday we will love Allah and then pray well!" They are not doing anything, just waiting, and saying: "If Allah wants, we will become a real human being and we will love Allah." I do not know where they have learned this way of carrying out the religion?!

We should not look at the peak of prayer in such a way that we become disappointed from our prayer [and stop praying altogether] like some people do, and when you tell them to pray they say: "You are telling me that I should pray?! Imām ʿAlī ﷺ should pray, and no one else!" With this excuse, they do not pray. How easily a person excuses oneself! They say one true thing and get several wrong results from it! They say: "We cannot pray. Our prayer is not a true prayer. Prayer is only for the Commander of the Faithful, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. We only stand up sluggishly, bend, then get up!"

If such words and thoughts are making a person disappointed and reducing one's motivation and seriousness in praying—and this is often the case—then these are satanic words, which the accursed Satan has brought to us.

Prayer is not a worship act which must be done with a special spiritual mood, with crying and lamenting, or which one must necessarily enjoy. Even if a person easily cries and grieves, this does not mean that they are always in the mood for worshiping. The Commander of the Faithful, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, said: *"Hearts are imbued with the power to advance and retreat."* [6] Therefore, sometimes a person is in the mood for worshiping, and sometimes they are not. This is why we must always pray our obligatory prayers, whether we are in the mood or not. It is obvious that for an act of worship—which a person must do every day, five times a day—it is not necessary for us to definitely cry while doing that act of worship. If it was compulsory for you to cry whenever you pray, then Allah would say: "Pray whenever you are in the mood." [7]

In the Qurʿān, Allah ﷻ says:

> "Indeed, the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongdoings." [8]

Therefore, this is one way we can gauge if our prayers are accepted or not, and if they are getting us closer to the Almighty.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why does the author say that a "good" prayer for us might be different than a good prayer for the *Awliyā'*?

How can someone become disappointed and stop praying completely if they have the wrong thoughts about prayer?

5 Noble Qurʿān, Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt (79), Verse 40.
6 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Ḥadīth #312.
7 *How to Pray a Good Prayer,* Pp. 71-79 (with slight edits where needed).
8 Noble Qurʿān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 45.

Activity 1.2b: Real-Life Connection

Think about someone you know who struggles to offer their prayers.

1. What do you think their perspective is on *ṣalāh*?

2. If they had a different outlook on *ṣalāh*, would it make them more keen on offering their *ṣalāh* more dutifully?

3. What is your outlook on *ṣalāh*?

Now that we know that praying a good prayer does not necessarily involve tears or any other spiritual mood, at least in the beginning, then where can we start from if we want to improve the inner form of our prayers? In the following passages, Shaykh Panāhiān says that we should at first try our best to be **polite** in our prayers. Politeness here means having the right etiquette and attitude toward prayer. If we start there, then we will see that with the help of Allah ﷻ, our prayers will start to become more meaningful. Shaykh Panāhiān offers four practical steps toward being polite in prayer.

Step 1: Following the Rules.

Step 2: Have the Right Attitude Before and After Prayer.

Step 3: Accept the Hardships and Move Forward.

Step 4: Focusing Our Mind.

We will take a closer look at these in the next lesson to understand them better, and see how we can apply them in our lives to improve our *ṣalāh*—this great connection to Allah ﷻ.

1.3 Worship at a Deeper Level - Part 2

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explore practical steps for being polite in prayer.
- Analyze how proper prayer etiquette can help us strengthen our *ṣalāh* and better this connection with Allah ﷻ.

In the previous lesson, we mentioned how Shaykh Panāhiān, in his book, *How to Pray a Good Prayer*, outlines four steps to being polite in prayer. Here we will delve deeper into what those steps are, and how we can try to apply them practically so we can be conscious in our daily prayers.

STEP 1: FOLLOWING THE RULES

We said before that prior to anything else, prayer is being obedient to Allah's command. The first step for us to obey Allah's commands is to internalize Allah's Greatness in our hearts. Now, what should we do for Allah's Greatness to become internalized in our hearts? The way we can do this is for us to "be polite in front of Allah." The first place where we should start to be polite in front of Allah is when we are praying. In fact, prayer is being polite in front of the Lord of the universe in the same way that being polite is the first action that a servant should practice and learn in one's dealings with the Master. Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn ﷺ explains the necessity of being polite while praying in this way:

> *"Prayer is (such) that you should know that it means standing in the presence of the Almighty Allah. In prayer, you are in front of Allah. So when you have understood this, you should be an abject, humble, eager, hopeful, fearful, destitute, and beseeching servant. You should stand with calmness and solemnity, due to your respect for the One Whom you are standing in front of."* [1]

Praying a good prayer can be very simple. For a while, try to be polite when praying. Gradually, you will see what love Allah has put in your heart for Himself. Little by little, Allah will give you knowledge which cannot be described. For now, learn to pray politely so that God-willing, in the future you will be successful in being able to pray with love and like a mystic…

What does praying politely mean? It means that while you are praying you say: "O Allah, whether I am in a good mood or not, whether I love You or not, whether I am afraid of You or not, whether it is hard for me to pray or not, no matter what, I have to be polite."

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 2, P. 619.

The first step to being polite is to carry out the rules of prayer. Pay careful attention to these few matters, which are about the rules for prayers:

- Laughing loudly when praying will nullify a person's prayer.
- Unnaturally stretching syllables of sentences when reciting the obligatory sentences of prayer in a way that the words are no longer recognizable will nullify a person's prayer.
- In general, small, unnecessary movements while praying are discouraged.

STOP AND REFLECT: How are the above mannerisms of being polite in prayer similar to how we might demonstrate politeness in a social situation?

Being polite is so important that one of the important dimensions of many of the rules for prayer is to be polite. Even if a person does not like someone, they should still be polite in front of them. Being polite is not hard. Pray politely. Does praying politely need a good mood? No, everyone can pray a polite prayer. Does it require that a person love the Almighty God? No, only a little understanding is needed, and thank God, almost everyone has more understanding than that.[2]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is being polite easier than being in a good mood? How can following the rules of prayer be a way of showing "politeness" in prayer?

STEP 2: HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE BEFORE AND AFTER THE PRAYER

When you want to perform *wuḍūʾ* in front of Allah, avoid making the purpose of the *wuḍūʾ* just to clean up and be neat, so that you can bang your hand quickly and impatiently, and leave! Is the reason why you are doing this task so impatiently because you are upset at doing it?! Do you want Allah to not let you pray and say (to you): "I do not want you to pray at all! Do not pray! Are you upset that I wanted to be your Lord and see your servitude?!"

Whenever a person prays, then gets up without reading the supplications which follow the prayer and leaves, Allah tells the angels: *"Give this person back their prayer. I have told them that they may ask for something after the prayers and I will give them whatever they want from Me; but, they just got up and left. Where are they going? Without reciting the recommended prayers which follow the prayer, which affairs of this world do they want to go take care of? Do they not know that all of their affairs are in My Hands?"* [3]

Do you know what the meaning of politeness is? It is possible that in many cases a person is not in the mood to show affection. Although they do not feel like doing so, they get up and stand up in front of their father [when he enters the room].

2 *How to Pray a Good Prayer,* Pp. 71-73 (with slight edits where needed).
3 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil,* Vol. 5, P. 29; Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 474.

This is being polite. If a person is polite, then they will smile and greet their neighbors when they see them, even if they are not in the mood to greet them at that moment. Even if you do not love your neighbor, when you see them, you greet them very respectfully. In a situation where there is no affection involved, politeness forces a person to behave well and correctly. Even when a person is not in need of the person who is in front of them, they will still show correct behavior due to their politeness.[4]

STOP AND REFLECT: What should a person who has the right attitude before and after the prayer do in order to improve their *ṣalāh* after reading the passage above?

STEP 3: ACCEPT THE HARDSHIPS AND MOVE FORWARD

The necessary condition for prayer to make a person polite is that they should accept its hardships. Even if you are not in the mood for praying, still stand up and pray firmly. If you realize that you are performing the *wuḍūʾ* too quickly [in a way that it is not correct], then tell yourself: "Wait! Perform the *wuḍūʾ* slower. This is not acceptable. Perform the *wuḍūʾ* again!" Go against your own desires. This is referred to as: "Fighting with your own will." For an act of worship like prayer, you will find that fighting with your own is very sweet!...[5]

STOP AND REFLECT: What example does the author provide of a hardship relating to prayer? What are some other similar examples?

STEP 4: FOCUSING OUR MIND

Someone may say: "Sir, I have many problems. My thoughts about my problems in life bother me. What can I do?" The answer is: "Pray on time, and forget your problems during prayer!" Tell yourself: "It is impolite to think about my problems before Allah." Deal with your problems like shoes! Leave them by the door and do not bring them in.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why might it be impolite to think about your problems before Allah ﷻ? Is Allah ﷻ not aware of all your problems?

We have certainly seen the places where they keep our shoes while we go into a shrine. What is the philosophy behind these places? Is it so that you will not lose your shoes?! (Of course) It is not just that. If you lose your shoes, will you no longer go to the shrine? When you go to a shrine, you address the Household of the Prophet: "May I be sacrificed for you! May my father, mother, and all of my being be sacrificed for you!"[6] If someone is willing to be sacrificed for someone else, then are they not willing to pass on their shoes?! So, the philosophy behind handing over our shoes must be something else…

4 *How to Pray a Good Prayer,* Pp. 71-79 (with slight edits where needed).
5 *How to Pray a Good Prayer,* Pp. 71-79 (with slight edits where needed).
6 *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 2, P. 614.

[The real reason] is because some of the pilgrims are weak, and their thoughts may wander to their shoes. That is why the helpers there take your shoes and take care of them, so that you can visit the shrine comfortably without any worries. May I be sacrificed for the shoe keepers at the doors of Allah's shrines! Allah's shrines are (like the daily) prayers. Whenever you wish to enter Allah's shrine, [it is as if] there is a shoe keeper standing there who calls out: "Remove your shoes, for indeed you are in Ṭuwā, the sacred valley."[7] The meaning of this is: "Take off your shoes and give them to me, then go and talk with Allah!" Now, what is meant by shoes? "Shoes" are the thoughts and imaginings about the problems and complications which come up in this world, and worldly attachments. Separate your worldly problems from yourself—just like your shoes, and give them to the shoe keeper, then say: "Allah is the Greatest" and start your prayer. Pray your prayer with a clear mind. Do not be afraid! He will keep (and protect) your shoes…

Do not worry, you can come and get your shoes after you finish praying! The dear, respectable shoe keepers who are in the shrines never wax your shoes. However, when you give your shoes to them in Allah's shrine, if a corner of one of them is torn, or a corner of your life has a lack, then they will sew and wax it too. When you return after praying, you will say, "Wow! My shoes have been cleaned." Do you know who this shoe keeper for Allah's shrine is? The only one who can be the shoe keeper for Allah's shrine to whom we give our problems when we are praying is Almighty Allah Himself! Allah tells us: "O My servant, if you have a problem or an entanglement, then at least entrust your problem or entanglement to Me for these few minutes while you are praying. Be sure that I will not ruin your things. Your situation will not get worse. Do not be afraid!"

It is enough if you just forget your problem while praying. Just remove it from your thinking for now and throw it aside. If a matter or problem enters your thinking while you are praying, then say: "No! It is not time for that now. I will think about that at another time…For these few minutes I do not want to think about my worldly problems." (Remind yourself and) Say: "Allah is the Greatest!" This means that Allah is greater than my problems. I am a servant now and have been assigned to say: "In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful." I have been assigned to say: "All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

I have been commanded to say: "The All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful." I have been commanded to say: "Master of the Day of Judgment." I am nothing but a servant now who must say: "You alone do we worship, and You alone do we ask for help."[8]

If you behave in this way and forget about your problems while praying, then God willing, you will see that your problems have been solved (for you) after you finish praying. Either you will become so big after praying that you do not whine over your problems, or your problems will become so small that they are not worth whining over. Why? It is just because you observed the inner politeness of prayer while you were praying and told your problems and entanglements: "No (just go away)!"[9]

In summary, *ṣalāh*—the pillar of our worship to Allah ﷻ—involves learning and implementing rules having to do with the outer form of the prayer, like how to perform *wuḍūʾ* correctly, how to pronounce the Arabic words of the prayer correctly, and how to position our body correctly. It also involves observing rules and etiquette pertaining to the inner form and spirit of our prayer. It is important to have a balanced understanding of *ṣalāh*. Both the form and spirit are important, and neither should be sacrificed for the other. In the passages above, the author outlined four useful steps for improving our *ṣalāh* through the approach of politeness. These are preliminary steps that, when acted upon, will lead to a closer connection to Allah ﷻ—in *ṣalāh* and outside of *ṣalāh*.

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ṭāhā (20), Verse 12. This is a reference to the command of Allah ﷻ to Prophet Mūsā ﷺ to take off his shoes before he enters the sacred valley of Ṭuwā to receive his first revelation.

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fātiḥah (1), Verses 1-5.

9 *How to Pray a Good Prayer,* Pp. 71-79 (with slight edits where needed).

Activity 1.3a: Self-Analysis

Over the course of this lesson, you have read and understood many new aspects of *ṣalāh*. Use the worksheet below to analyze where you are currently with your *ṣalāh,* and then make goals about how you hope to strengthen your *ṣalāh* over the next few months.

Ṣalāh Self-Analysis Worksheet

1. What was your perspective or understanding of *ṣalāh* prior to this lesson?

2. How has what you read in this lesson sparked curiosity or brought about a change in how you view your *ṣalāh* from here on out? If it has not changed, then why do you think that is?

3. Shaykh Panāhiān mentions in his book how we have to continue praying even if we do not feel like worshiping. Why do you think that is?

4. Is this something you currently do (continue to pray even if we do not feel like worshiping)? If not, how do you plan to work on this?

5. Create three goals that you want to establish in order to strengthen your prayers, in the chart below.

GOAL	REASON FOR THE GOAL	WHAT IS YOUR DAILY PLAN TO BUILD CONSISTENCY TOWARD YOUR GOAL?
Example: My goal is to pray each prayer right on time as soon as the time sets in.	This will help me prioritize *ṣalāh* despite a hectic schedule.	To set a *ṣalāh* alarm for each prayer time a few minutes before the time starts so I can prepare myself and then pray right on time.
Goal 1:		
Goal 2:		
Goal 3:		

1.4 Despair and Hope in Trying Times

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Demonstrate the fine line between hope and despair in an Islamic context.
- Understand the Mercy of Allah ﷻ through repentance *(tawbah)*.
- Compare and contrast the different types of despair, and how to handle each in a way that brings us closer to Allah ﷻ.
- Understand and explain why some *duʾās* may not be answered.

STOP AND REFLECT: What will be the outcome of someone who does not have hope in Allah ﷻ? What is the problem with having too much hope that Allah ﷻ will always forgive us no matter what?

When it comes to understanding despair and hope, we should not take wrong advantage of Allah's Mercy—in other words, a person goes on doing whatever they please, and just assumes that Allah is All-Merciful so He will forgive them no matter what. On the other hand, an individual must not lose hope in Allah's Mercy such that they give up. Losing hope in Allah's Mercy is called *al-Yaʿs* or *al-Qunūt*, which literally means 'to despair.' The opposite of this—false hope or feeling safe from Allah's Wrath—is called *al-Amn min Makrillāh*.

When people have too much hope that Allah ﷻ will forgive them, they continue to sin and commit vices over and over again without having much care to improve themselves. If a person continuously commits the same sins with this kind of an attitude, then this spiritual disease of false hope or feeling safe from Allah's Wrath could be the cause.

When people have too little hope in Allah ﷻ, they can often fall into despair. This may cause them to commit more sins, avoid asking for forgiveness, or refrain from performing good deeds because they think they are not capable of doing much.

As human beings, we were created to get closer to Allah ﷻ, and become the best version of ourselves through the actions that He has prescribed for us. He sent the Noble Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ as guides for us because He wants us to be successful in this world and the Hereafter.

Having too much hope and doing whatever we like is not what Allah ﷻ created us for, nor is having too little hope and falling into despair.

When it comes to the major sins, the second one after polytheism *(shirk)* is to despair in the Mercy of Allah ﷻ—where a person believes that if they commit a sin, then they have bound themselves to Hell, thus developing an attitude of hopelessness. This attitude only festers and can grow within us, allowing us to think that we cannot turn back to Allah ﷻ after having sinned. This will only lead to committing further sinful acts; whereas we could have been pardoned if we would have repented. Yet, the one who despairs will not be pardoned because this attitude or way of thinking does not guide a person to repentance, it will only lead one to commit further acts of transgression against Allah ﷻ.

DESPAIR AFTER SINNING

Shaytān, and/or our lowly inner self, might tempt us to commit sins, but those who commit sins can always repent. His ultimate objective is that we should completely cut off our relationship with Allah ﷻ in every way possible, whether it is through the daily prayers *(ṣalāh)*, supplications (*duʾās),* seeking repentance *(istighfār)*, or other means that we use to get closer to the Almighty Creator. These tempt us to sin and hope that after sinning, we will not bother to ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness, thinking that it is futile to do so. We begin to develop guilt which makes us believe that perhaps we have gone out of the Mercy of Allah ﷻ, or that we will commit the same type of sin again and again, or simply that we do not deserve forgiveness. But we cannot fall into this trap of despair, rather, we need to turn to Allah ﷻ and repent for our shortcomings, supplicate to Him, and seek His closeness. *Tawbah*, in its sincere form, is seeking forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. While *tawbah* has its own conditions, the concept of forgiveness within Islam is always open and available. It is one of the all-encompassing mercies of Allah ﷻ. Had this avenue of seeking forgiveness been closed, no one could have ever reached salvation.

In reality, no matter how much a person sins, the mercy, kindness, and love of Allah ﷻ is still limitless, and Allah ﷻ is always willing to forgive someone if they sincerely turn back to Him. This is beautifully conveyed in the Noble Qurʾān as follows:

"Say: 'O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls (by sinning), do not despair of the Mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah will forgive all sins. Surely, He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.'" [1]

Āyatullāh Khomeini writes the following in his book, *Forty Ḥadīth*:

> *"My dear, let not Shayṭān and the carnal self take hold of you, or make the matter appear an insurmountable difficulty in your eyes, and thus finish you off by making you refrain from repentance (tawbah). Do know that it is better to act in this regard even if to a small extent. If the unoffered prayers, fasts, and atonements are many, or if the unfulfilled duties of Allah are numerous, or the people's usurped rights are innumerable, or if your sins are abundant and your vices are plenty, (even then) do not despair of the Grace of Allah, and do not lose hope in His Mercy. The Almighty will facilitate your passage if you act to the extent of your capacity, and He will show you the path to salvation. You should know that to despair of the Mercy of Allah is (one of) the biggest of sins, and I do not think that any other sin has a more evil effect upon the soul."* [2]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What is the overall message of Āyatullāh Khomeini in the above passage? What is he telling us about repentance *(tawbah)*? Compare and discuss your answer with a partner.

DESPAIR IN TROUBLING TIMES

Despair in Allah ﷻ is not just when we sin. Sometimes, people despair when they are in trouble and their prayers are not being answered. By their nature, when things are going well in life, people feel Allah ﷻ is on their side, but when Allah ﷻ tests them, they lose hope and think that Allah ﷻ has abandoned them and no longer cares about them. Surely Allah ﷻ is our Creator and Nurturer, and even though we plan things, Allah ﷻ is the Best of Planners and the All-Knowing One. Our hardships and trials in this world only make us stronger in seeking closeness to Allah ﷻ. We must always remember that the Almighty has a plan for us, and He will test us in this world; but He also wants us to succeed, and make it to the eternal Paradise.

In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ gives us many examples of past Prophets ﷺ to show us how He tested them quite severely, but also helped immensely them in their times of need.

One of the greatest lessons of hope comes from the story of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ through the magicians of Firʾawn. At one point in time, they were the worst of people who were trying to misguide people through their magic. But in an instant, when they were shown the truth, they displayed courage and faith, and became 'Muslims'—submitters to Allah and to the truth. After they were guided, even though Firʾawn threatened to cut their hands and legs on opposite sides, and to crucify them (which he did), they never despaired in Allah ﷻ, and remained steadfast on the path of truth.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 53.
2 Āyatullāh Khomeini, *Forty Hadiths: An Exposition of Ethical and Mystical Traditions*, P. 292, Paragraph 3. (with slight edits where needed)

Prophet Mūsā ﷺ also never lost hope in the Almighty even when he was trapped on the shores of a sea with hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children with him, while the army of Firʿawn was fast approaching them.

Prophet Ibrāhim ﷺ did not despair or lose hope in the Almighty One even as he was being thrown in the air toward a raging fire. Allah ﷻ changed the nature of the fire and made it cool for him.[3] This great Prophet ﷺ was also told to put a knife to the throat of his beloved son [Prophet Ismā'il ﷺ] in obedience to Allah ﷻ, but he never lost hope in the Mercy of the Creator, and in the end, Allah ﷻ saved his son.

Prophet Ayyūb ﷺ suffered several very difficult trials: All of his family members died; he lost his wealth, farms, and animals; but he never complained, instead he maintained his deep faith in Allah ﷻ at all times.

When he called out to his Lord: *"'Indeed, distress has befallen me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful ones.' So We answered his prayer and removed his distress, and We gave him [back] his family along with others like them as a mercy from Us, and a reminder for the worshippers (of Allah)."* [4]

Prophet Yūnus ﷺ was saved from the belly of a whale; Prophet Ibrāhim ﷺ and Prophet Zakariyyā ﷺ were blessed with children at a very old age; the Ka'bah was saved from the attack of Abraha and his elephants; the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ narrowly escaped assassination on the night of Hijrah; and the sacrifice of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and his companions for Islam—are all examples of people of Allah ﷻ. These and such individuals have certain things in common—complete trust in Allah ﷻ, never despair or lose hope in the Almighty, the utmost of patience, and confidence that in the end they will be successful.

We learn through the Qurʾān and the *aḥādīth* that it is not only the Prophets and Imāms ﷺ who can attain Paradise if they do not despair, but even regular people can also reach such a high status. This is why we must understand the importance of placing our full trust in Allah ﷻ at ALL times.

Our supplications and prayers *(duʿās)* are like cords that connect us to Allah ﷻ. When we despair, we cut this cord. It is for this reason that despair is such a major sin.

Allah ﷻ tells the final Messenger ﷺ in the Qurʾān: *"And when My servants ask you about Me, (then tell them that) surely, I am very near; I answer the prayer of the one who calls upon Me."* [5]

"And your Lord says: 'Call upon Me, I will answer you.' Indeed, those who are too proud to worship Me, will enter the fire of Hell (in) humiliation." [6]

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 69.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verses 83-84.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 186.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ghāfir (40), Verse 60.

DUʿĀS WHICH ARE NOT ANSWERED IN THIS WORLD

When we have a great need or desire, and we pray to Allah ﷻ desperately but our prayers are not answered immediately, then we must trust that there is a reason for this—that we may or may not realize one day. There are many elements that are unknown to us, but Allah ﷻ is All- Knowing, All-Loving, All-Powerful, All-Compassionate, and only wants what is **best for us** in His Infinite Knowledge. While we may 'think' that something is good for us, we do not have the complete picture or the ability to know the future. Not having our prayers or wishes answered can be a test to increase our status and strengthen ourselves spiritually. We may ask for something, and Allah ﷻ does not grant that specific thing to us right away in the time we want, or the way we want, but in the end, we must trust that He will give us even more than what we anticipated.

These tests in enduring patience and hardships increase our faith and bring us closer to the Almighty which is the ultimate goal of life. Allah ﷻ says in Noble Qurʾān:

> "It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and you may love a thing while it is evil for you. And surely Allah knows, while you do not know." [7]

Reflect on the following story:

Once, Thaʿlabah ibn Hātib Anṣāri approached the Prophet ﷺ and said to him: *"O Prophet of Allah! Pray to Allah that He grants me wealth and riches."*

The Prophet ﷺ advised him: *"Little wealth for which you are able to offer thanksgiving is better than immense riches for which you will be unable to offer thanksgiving."*

Thaʿlabah went away, but later approached the Prophet ﷺ a second time, repeating his request. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"You will not obey me. By Allah! If I wished that the mountains would turn into gold for me, they would do so."*

Thaʿlabah went away, but then returned a third time and again placed his request before the Prophet ﷺ and implored: *"Do pray for me. I promise that if Allah grants me wealth, whoever possesses a right in it, I will give it to them."*

The Prophet ﷺ prayed for him and Allah ﷻ answered his prayers. Thaʿlabah initially purchased some sheep, which slowly grew in number until they became plentiful.

Before, he used to offer all of his prayers behind the Prophet ﷺ, but after his wealth and riches began to increase, he would only be present for the Ẓuhr and the ʿAṣr prayers, and spent the rest of his time looking after his sheep.

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 216.

As time passed, his work increased to such an extent that he could only manage to come to Medina for the Friday prayers; and eventually even this became a thing of the past. He would only come up to the road leading toward Medina and seek news of the city from the passers-by.

One day, the Prophet ﷺ inquired about him, whereupon he was informed that Thaʿlabah's sheep had increased manifold and he had settled outside of Medina. Hearing this, the Noble Messenger ﷺ cried out three times: *"Woe be unto Tha'labah!"*

After a period of time, the verse pertaining to *zakāh* was revealed. The Prophet ﷺ selected two individuals to collect *zakāh* from the people and commanded them to collect it from Thaʿlabah as well. When they came to Tha'labah, they read out the order for the collection of *zakāh*. After some thought, Thaʿlabah said to them: *"This is a type of jizyā (a tax that is taken from the free non-Muslim subjects who are living under an Islamic government), or something akin to it. Go and collect it from the others, then come back to me later on."*

Other people not only listened to the orders of Allah ﷻ, but even insisted on giving the best of their camels as *zakāh*. On the way back, when they again approached Thaʿlabah, he once again made an excuse, and did not pay his obligatory dues.

The collectors returned to the Prophet ﷺ, but before they could speak, he exclaimed: *"Woe be unto Thaʿlabah!"* Then he prayed for the generous people who gave the best of their camels. The collectors then narrated to him their encounter with Thaʿlabah, after which the following verses were revealed:

"And among them are those who made a pledge with Allah (saying): 'If He gives us out of His grace, we will surely give charity, and we will surely be among the righteous.' But when He gave them out of His grace, they were stingy with it and turned away, being disregardful. So He caused hypocrisy to ensue in their hearts until the Day they will encounter Him, because of their going back on what they had promised Allah, and because of the lies they used to tell." [8]

One of Thaʿlabah's relatives, who had been present during the revelation of the above verses, informed him about this. On hearing about it, he hastened to the Prophet ﷺ and entreated him to accept his *zakāh*, but the Messenger ﷺ refused saying: *"Allah has ordered me not to accept your zakāh."* Tha'labah was devastated to hear this. *"This is a consequence of your own deeds. I advised you, but you refused to comply with my orders,"* the Prophet ﷺ told him.

After the demise of the Prophet (s), Tha'labah tried to give his *zakāh* to the caliphs of the time, but none of them accepted it, until death finally overtook Thaʿlabah.[9]

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9) Verses 75-77.

9 Sadāqat, A. (2003, October). *Anecdotes for Reflection, Part 1.* https://www.al-islam.org/anecdotes-reflection-part-1-sayyid-ali-akbar-sadaaqat/16-stinginess#4-Zakāt-tha%E2%80%99labah-ansaari-not-accepted

Activity 1.4a: Ḥadīth Analysis

With a partner, answer the following questions based on this narration. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

1. What does this story have to do with our supplications not being answered?

2. Why did Thaʿlabah reject the Prophet's messengers?

3. Why did the Prophet ﷺ reject Thaʿlabah's *zakāh*?

4. Think about the ending of this story and the concept of repentance *(tawbah).* Why is it important to seek forgiveness right away and not wait?

Once the Prophet ﷺ discouraged Thaʿlabah from seeking to be wealthy, he should have been content with his situation. Thaʿlabah's circumstances were such that becoming wealthy was destructive to his faith. There might be others for whom becoming wealthy is a source of goodness. Wealth is not necessarily a bad thing; what matters is to whom we attribute our success, and how we use what we are given by Allah ﷻ.

Activity 1.4b: Review Questions

1. What is the balanced perspective that this lesson speaks about?

2. What are two situations where people tend to despair; and what are two scenarios where one's faith can really shine?

3. Imagine that a friend comes to you who is really down and dejected. They are feeling terrible about a major exam they failed even though they had prepared decently for it. What words of hope can you offer them on the basis of their faith in Allah and His Mercy?

4. Why do you think that the concept of *tawbah* is so important in Islam?

5. Explain in your own words why some supplications *(duʿāṣ)* may not be answered at all, or how sometimes they are not fulfilled when one may want them to be?

CHAPTER 2

Spiritual Diseases

2.1 Istighfār and Tawbah

2.2 Living a Humble Life

2.3 Anger

2.1 Istighfār and Tawbah

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define *tawbah* and *istighfār.*
- Learn the conditions of *tawbah*.
- Acquire daily tips for sincere repentance.

ISTIGHFĀR: Asking Allah ﷻ to forgive us for our sins and mistakes.

TAWBAH: Making a firm resolution not to sin again and turning back to Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: What would happen if we were never given the opportunity to repent?

In this temporary world, we are given many opportunities to try to get closer to Allah ﷻ by being tested and tried. When this happens, sometimes we may falter and fall into our desires, thus becoming distant from the Almighty One. However, the All-Merciful Allah ﷻ has told us that if we repent sincerely, then we will be forgiven, if Allah Wills. The ability to ask for forgiveness from the Creator is a great blessing.

Asking Allah ﷻ to forgive us for our sins and mistakes is called *istighfār*. Making a firm resolution not to sin again and turning back to Allah ﷻ in repentance is called *tawbah*. This means that when a person commits a sin and then decides to repent, they should first do *istighfār* (seek forgiveness), then do *tawbah* (turn back to Allah ﷻ). A complete and most sincere change of heart and turning back to Allah ﷻ is called *Tawbatan Naṣūḥan* (sincere and complete repentance) as it is referred to in the Qurʾān where Allah ﷻ says: *"O you who believe, repent to Allah with sincere repentance."* [1]

Muʾāwiyah ibn Wahb narrates: *"I heard Abā ʿAbdillah say: 'When a servant turns to Allah with sincere repentance (tawbatan naṣūhān), Allah loves that person and covers them (i.e. conceals their sins) in this world and the Hereafter.'"* I said: *"How does He cover them?"* The Imām ﷺ replied: *"He makes the two angels (assigned to write the deeds of a person) forget that which they have written in regard to one's sins. Then He inspires one's bodily members (saying): 'Conceal their sins;' and He inspires the Earth's places (who witnessed the deeds that): 'Conceal the sins which they committed on you.' Then one meets Allah, and at that time one meets Him, it will be in such a manner that there is nothing to give witness against them regarding any sin."* [2]

STOP AND REFLECT: Describe the elements of Allah's immense Mercy in this *ḥadīth*. How does Allah ﷻ protect a sinner in this world and the next when one seeks forgiveness?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Taḥrīm (66), Verse 8.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 6, P. 28.

ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS RIGHT AWAY

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qur'ān:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

"And those who, when they commit an indecent act or wrong themselves, remember Allah, and plead [to Allah seeking His] forgiveness for their sins—and who forgives sins except Allah?—and who knowingly do not persist in what [sins] they have committed." [3]

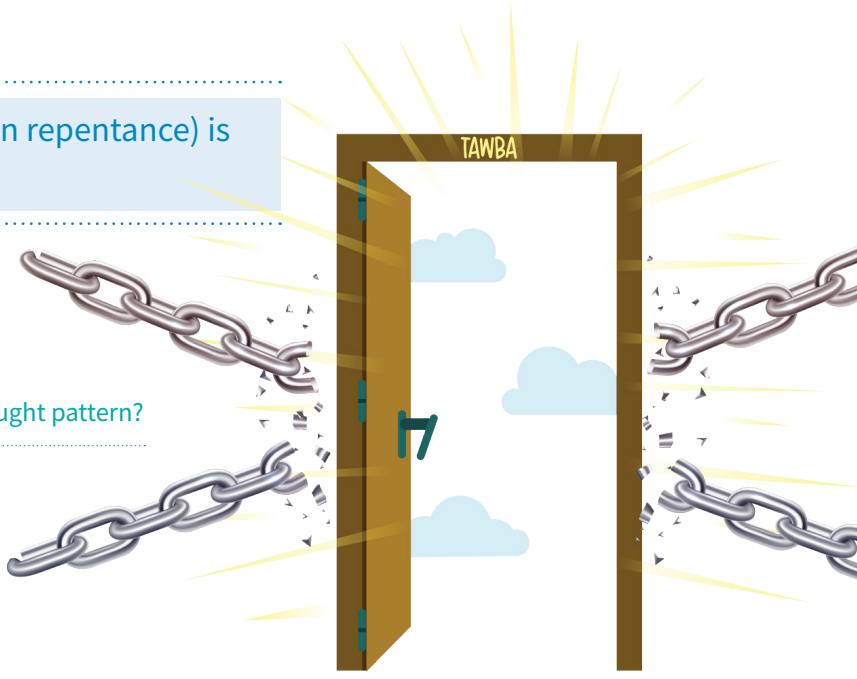
إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِن قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا. وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا.

"The [acceptance of] repentance by Allah is only for those who commit evil out of ignorance, then repent soon (after). It is such whose repentance Allah will accept; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. But [acceptance of] repentance is not for those who go on committing misdeeds (until) when death approaches one of them, they say: 'Indeed, I repent now.' Nor is it for those who die while they are disbelievers. For such We have prepared a painful punishment." [4]

By keeping the doors of *istighfār* and *tawbah* open until the end of a person's life, Allah ﷻ ensures that no one has a valid excuse as to why they could not prepare their souls to become purified, and thus be worthy of entering into Paradise. On the Day of Judgment, if a person says: *"O Allah! I was unaware and ignorant; I was chained by passions and lowly desires, and I could not resist the temptations of Shaytān!"* then they will be told in reply: *"Was the door of tawbah not always open for you?"*

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

> "The door of tawbah (turning back to Allah in repentance) is always open." [5]



STOP AND REFLECT: Is there a problem with thinking that we can continue to sin now and just do *tawbah* later on? If so, what is the issue with this thought pattern?

3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 135.
4 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ(4), Verses 17-18.
5 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 12, P. 131.

If the opportunity for *istighfār* and *tawbah* is readily and always available to us, then why should we avoid sins? The reason is that when we try hard to obey Allah ﷻ, but make a mistake once in a while, then we will rush to do *istighfār* out of shame and regret. But if we make it a habit of sinning, then our hearts will become hard and we will become too proud to ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness. Soon, we will find that even when we repent, we will not be sincere in our seeking repentance and we will only do it half-heartedly.

Performing *tawbah* constantly makes for a good habit, and when we develop such good habits, we will constantly be reminded of our Lord and will sin less.

One of the rewards of sincere repentance is that not only does Allah ﷻ erase the evil deeds of a person who seeks forgiveness, but He actually changes those bad actions into good deeds so that the time that was spent in sin is now counted as time spent in doing good:

"Except for those who repent, have faith, and act righteously. For them, Allah will replace their vices with good deeds; and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." [6]

This is because of the great love that Allah ﷻ has for us! The more that we are able to repent sincerely, the more our reward from Allah ﷻ will be, as He is All-Aware of our struggles and rewards us immensely for them.

ISTIGHFĀR IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE AHLUL BAYT ﷺ

Istighfār and *tawbah* are so important that even the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ used to do these all the time. The supplications *(duʿās)* from our Imāms ﷺ typically include *istighfār* and *tawbah* in almost all of them; and Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn ﷺ has a special *duʿāʾ* just for this, called *Duʿāʾ at-Tawbah*.

STOP AND REFLECT: If the Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ were immaculate and free of sins, then why do we have narrations and supplications of them asking for forgiveness?

> *""I recite istighfār 70 times every day."*
>
> — Noble Prophet ﷺ

The Maʿṣūmīn ﷺ never committed any sins, but they would still beg for forgiveness from Allah ﷻ out of humility, as they always felt they had not worshiped Allah ﷻ as He deserves to be worshiped, nor were they able to thank Him enough for all of the blessings which He constantly provided them with. Even though they never committed any sins and were always aware of Allah's presence, they would sometimes sense their spiritual hearts were slightly clouded because of their interactions with this world, so they would consistently seek forgiveness from the Almighty.

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"I recite istighfār 70 times every day."* [7] Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is quoted to have said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never got up from any gathering without reciting *istighfār* 25 times.[8]

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Furqān (25), Verse 70.
7 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 25.
8 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 504.

One good habit to form is to recite *istighfār (Astaghfirullāha Rabbī wa atūbu ilayh)* 100 times every day (so one *tasbīḥ* of it). This can be at bedtime before going to sleep, or after the *Fajr ṣalāh*. In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ praises those who seek forgiveness in the early hours of the morning:

"[They are] patient, and truthful, and obedient, and charitable, and they plead for [Allah's] forgiveness at dawn." [9]

"They used to sleep a little during the night, and at dawn, they would plead for forgiveness." [10]

AN ANECDOTE ON SINCERE REPENTANCE

When the order prohibiting wine was revealed, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ sent out a caller who announced in all of the streets of Medina that from now on, no one should consume alcohol. By chance, one day, the Messenger ﷺ was passing through an alley when a Muslim also entered it carrying a bottle of wine in his hand. He was terrified upon seeing the Prophet ﷺ approach, so he prayed to Allah ﷻ: *"O Allah! I sincerely repent for this (drinking wine), and I promise that I will never drink again. Please save me from being disgraced before Your Messenger!"*

When the Prophet ﷺ came closer, he asked the man: *"What is in the bottle?"*

The man replied: *"It contains vinegar."* The Messenger ﷺ put forward his hand and asked the man to put a little bit on his palm. With trembling hands, the man did so, and when the Prophet ﷺ examined it, it was indeed vinegar. The man was overwhelmed with emotions and began to weep, then he said: "By Allah! It was wine! But just now, I repented and begged Allah not to disgrace me in front of you."

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ confirmed this, and said that it was a practical example of how if a person repents sincerely, then *"For them, Allah will replace their vices with good deeds; and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful."* [11]

SINCERE REPENTANCE

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the connection between the verse that the Messenger ﷺ recited and what the man had done?

One time, a person said *"Astaghfirullāh!"* (I seek Allah's forgiveness!) in front of Imām ʿAlī ؑ. The Imām ؑ said to him: *"May your mother mourn for you! Do you know what istighfār is? Verily, istighfār is a degree of the ʿilliyūn (those with high status), and it is a word that has six parts to it. First is remorse over the past. Second is the resolution not to return to [that sin] ever again. Third is to return any creatures their rights (that you usurped of theirs in the past) so that you meet Almighty Allah in such a state of purity that no one has a claim against you. Fourth is that you fulfill every duty that was neglected by you, in order to satisfy your obligation in respect of it..."* [12]

In addition to these points, the narration further indicates that one should feel upset about having committed those sins, and to try to make amends to demonstrate one's true regret. For example, if a person ate food that was forbidden *(ḥarām)* on purpose, then they could fast for a number of days so that the impermissible food consumed can be removed from one's body.

This *ḥadīth* teaches us that truly undoing wrong that was performed can take time and effort. For example, someone who posts a nasty social media message shaming someone else, deletes it thereafter. However, in deleting it, were they able to remove that person's hurt feelings? Or were they able to reinstate the bad reputation and negative dignity that was spread about them?

Erasing can be as quick as a click, but this deleting is the first layer of *tawbah*. Trying to make amends is a significant part of the process of improving ourselves so that we do not go back to the same mistakes. *Tawbah* alone will not give us protection from slipping again. Rather, we need to have and maintain constant vigilance over ourselves.

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 17.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51), Verses 17-18.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Furqān (25), Verse 70; Story taken from *Qaṣaṣ at-Tawwābīn* (Stories of the Repenters), Story #12.
12 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Short Saying #417.

STOP AND REFLECT: List the conditions that were mentioned for sincere *tawbah* stated in the narration above. Why do you think each of these conditions is important?

Let us look at another example and try to apply what we have learned from this *ḥadīth*. Let us say that we did something wrong to someone else. When we realize our mistake, we should first apologize to them, then seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. If for some reason this is not possible, or doing so would cause more harm than good, then we can pray that they forgive us, and for their well-being; then turn to Allah ﷻ in repentance.

When an action has a physical consequence, like when a person steals, they should make up for that action by returning what they stole, and then asking for forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. If returning the item is not possible, then they should give that amount in charity.

Activity 2.1a: Scenarios

For the following scenarios, provide a logical answer based on what you have learned so far.

1. You find out that your little brother Jawad stole some candy from the store beside your house. You need to give him guidance and show him the way to Allah's mercy and forgiveness. What advice would you give him?

2. Ahmad spoke badly about his friend, Muhammad. He now feels upset at himself for doing so. There was no harm to the reputation of Muhammad, and to bring it up to him would sever the relationship and cause more problems. What should Ahmad do?

TIPS FOR REPENTANCE

When we realize that we have made a mistake, or we want to ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness and repent back to Him for our shortcomings, there are some things that can help us on this journey to get back on track and become closer to the Almighty once again. Some of these tips are as follows:

1. **Everyday Reflection:** If we reflect on what we have done on a daily basis, then it will be easier for us to catch our mistakes, and repent for those sins before we forget.
2. **Reflect on our Vices:** It is highly recommended to review our past for sins we have committed against Allah ﷻ or toward people, and to ask for forgiveness for those. Then, we should seek repentance for those vices that we committed, but do not know or remember that we did them.
3. **Recite the Qurʾān:** Reciting and contemplating on the Qurʾān helps to soften our hearts so that we are more able to ask for forgiveness.

4. **Supplicate to Allah ﷻ:** Praying to Allah ﷻ to forgive us is very important. We should speak to Him regularly; and recite and contemplate on the specified supplications such as *Duʿāʾ Kumayl, Duʿāʾ at-Tawbah,* and the various other *duʿās* that are recommended to be recited after the daily prayers.
5. **Be Hopeful:** We should always be hopeful that Allah ﷻ will forgive us. If we stop persisting in sin, and seek sincere repentance, then we should be hopeful that Allah ﷻ will forgive us. We then need to move on to become better individuals gradually over time—with the help of Allah ﷻ. Shayṭān wants us to dwell on our sins and vices, be hopeless, and not seek forgiveness.

6. **Forgive Others:** If we want to be forgiven by Allah ﷻ, then it is crucial for us to forgive others. We should try to reflect if we are upset with anyone, and work on overlooking their shortcomings. One way to do this is to pray for them. When we can find it in our hearts to forgive others, then the Almighty will be more willing to forgive us.

Activity 2.1b: Reflection

Contemplate the following questions. You will not be asked to share your answers.

1. What mistakes do you feel that you make repeatedly?

2. How would you like to improve?

3. What steps can you take to work on these shortcomings?

4. What is a good time for you to reflect on your day and take account of yourself and your actions on a daily basis?

5. How can you stay motivated to do better and be hopeful that Allah ﷻ will forgive you?

Activity 2.1c: Review Questions

1. How does Allah ﷻ protect a sinner in this world and the next when they seek forgiveness and truly repent?

2. How can you implement the tips for repentance within your daily life in a realistic way?

3. Explain in your own words, what is sincere repentance?

4. When is the best time to do *istighfār*? Based on your own experiences and knowledge that you have gained, what is so special about this particular time of the day?

5. From the narration above of Imām ʿAlī ؑ, what are some of the steps to true repentance? Use real-life examples to demonstrate your understanding. Why is it important to seek repentance sincerely and wholeheartedly?

2.2 Living a Humble Life

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define arrogance and humility, and understand specific traits of each characteristic.
- Define *ʿujb* and *rīyā'*, and examine what they look like in daily life.
- Analyze social media and its bragging nature.
- Examine how to live a more humble and dignified life, and try to apply this advice in our own lives.

STOP AND REFLECT: What was the vice, i.e. spiritual disease, that caused Shayṭān's fall?

In the Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ tells us that Shayṭān had *kibr* (arrogance).

"And when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate before Ādam,' they (all) prostrated, except Iblīs: he refused and acted arrogantly, and he became one of the disbelievers." [1]

In this lesson, we will take a closer look at both arrogance and humility. We will also examine the traits of people who possess these characteristics.

ARROGANCE (AL-KIBR) AND HUMILITY (AT-TAWĀDUʿ)

Takabbur is defined as 'haughty pride, arrogance, or imperiousness.' It is also called *kibr* in Arabic. Arrogance is when we think of ourselves as being better than others, ignoring that everything we have is from Allah ﷻ.

Tawāduʿ is defined as 'humility,' and it is the opposite of being arrogant toward others and boasting about oneself. When we are humble, we know that even if we are blessed with good qualities that others have not been given, we realize that everything we have is from Allah ﷻ.

When we accomplish or acquire something good and are being praised for it, Shaytān whispers to our inner self *(nafs)* trying to cause us to reach the conclusion that we are great, and that we are better than others. If we give into this belief, then it will continue until we actually believe it and start behaving as if we are better than others and expect to be treated a certain way.

Takabbur enters our hearts very secretly—it tries to hide from us, and take over our thoughts quietly. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said:

> "Pride enters your heart like a black ant crawling under a rock in a dark night." [2]

Meaning that it can be so difficult to notice it, or realize that it is there.

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Baqarah (2), Verse 34.
2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol 5, P. 150.

Activity 2.2a: Scenarios

How do you think a person with pride *(kibr)* would talk about or react to the following events, compared to a person with humility *(tawāduʿ)*? Write an example for each scenario below.

1. Placing first in a test or examination.

   a. Person with pride:

   b. Person with humility:

2. Reciting Qurʾān or duʿāʾ in front of a large crowd or giving a speech in public.

   a. Person with pride:

   b. Person with humility:

3. Winning a medal at a sports event.

   a. Person with pride:

b. Person with humility:

4. Beating their friends in a game or sport.

a. Person with pride:

b. Person with humility:

5. Talking about their parents or relatives if they were famous.

a. Person with pride:

b. Person with humility:

BRAGGING

A sign of an arrogant person *(mutakabbir)* is that they are also boastful. Allah ﷻ dislikes people who are haughty, proud, or who boast:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

"And do not turn your cheek (face) away from people (in contempt), nor go about in the land with pride; surely, Allah does not love any arrogant boaster." [3]

Bragging is being proud and talking boastfully about one's own achievements or possessions. It consists of two components: *ʿujb* (self-conceit) and *rīyāʾ* (showing off). *ʿUjb* is an internal feeling of arrogance that makes a person feel superior to others. *Kibr* (pride)—which we mentioned was the cause of Shayṭān's fall—is a branch of *ʿujb* (self-conceit). *Rīyāʾ* (showing off) is an off-set to one who is self-conceited. The combination of *ʿujb* and *rīyāʾ* lead to the trait of *tafākhur* (bragging).

A person might feel proud because they are talented, rich, good-looking, or even pious. When one does a good deed or gets a blessing from Allah ﷻ, then naturally they may become joyful. This joy is good if they are then thankful and appreciative that Allah ﷻ gave them the grace and blessing to do what was good. The feeling of *ʿujb* which is bad is when an individual thinks that whatever good came to them was from themselves, and thus they become arrogant then as a result of that.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Ṣūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 18.

The internal feeling of *ʿujb* leads to the second component of bragging which is *rīyāʾ*. *ʿUjb* is a feeling on the inside, whereas *rīyāʾ* is when one's arrogance manifests itself through actions by showing off. *Rīyāʾ* is when a person shows off to capture the attention of those around them, or makes oneself appear to be of higher standing than one truly is. It could also be that an individual thinks Allah ﷻ blessed them with something because they are somehow special or deserving of it compared to others.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

- What are some real-life examples of what *ʿujb* (self-conceit) looks like?
- What are some real-life examples of *rīyāʾ* (showing off)?

Forms of Bragging

Bragging exists in many different forms. The three primary areas that people tend to brag about are material possessions, God-given attributes, and accomplishments.

Bragging about Material Possessions

We can easily be trapped into bragging about something that we own. When we shop, there are many different brands available. Sometimes, we may purchase expensive, brand name products, but we have to be careful not to show off, or think we are better than others for owning such brands. It is okay to buy brand name products if they are better quality and not excessive; however, if we buy it only to give ourselves a particular status and feel more special than others, then this can be a form of *rīyāʾ*.

Social media can often encourage us to buy the newest items even if we do not need them. We might feel pressured to buy things we do not need because of advertising, or seeing influencers buying them.

Bragging about God-given Attributes

Another area where bragging is common is in relation to our God-given attributes. People often feel superior if they have certain talents or attributes. For example, if Allah ﷻ blessed someone to have exceptional talent at math, art, or sports; or to be naturally strong; or have a good memory, then they might begin to feel arrogant due to those skills and think they are better than others.

Accomplishments

The third common thing that people brag about is their accomplishments. In order to be successful, we have to work hard and put in a lot of effort. Throughout our entire lives, we are constantly trying to optimize our potential, whether it is studying hard to get into a good university, working on ourselves to become closer to Allah ﷻ, or training to be successful at a certain sport. While striving toward success, we must be careful not to become arrogant or brag about our accomplishments. After all, the drive, ability, and strength to be able to put in this hard work, and its results, are all from Allah—He can take them away as easily as He gives them. So we should give credit where credit is due.

STOP AND REFLECT: Is it okay to be happy with all these things? What is the major difference between feeling joy about these things and bragging about them?

Accomplishments also include worshiping Allah ﷻ. When we have an opportunity to do something good, like praying *Ṣalātul Layl,* fasting a recommended *(mustaḥab)* fast, helping someone in need, or donating some money in charity, we should do our best to keep it hidden from others. This will prevent us from believing or thinking that we are better than others. When we have the opportunity to volunteer at an event, we should make sure our intentions are purely for the sake of Allah ﷻ—not to show off to others.

There is an anecdote that one day, a man was reciting his prayer in an empty *masjid*. Halfway through his prayer, he heard the door open behind him. It occurred to him that someone must have entered the *masjid*—so he started to pray giving more attention to detail, making sure that his recitation sounded perfect, and that all of his actions looked righteous—all in order to impress the person that had just arrived. After completing his prayer, he turned around to see who had entered—only to find that it was a dog! In this example, the man had been fooled, so he changed the manner of his prayer to show off to 'the person' whom he mistakenly thought had entered the *masjid*.

Sometimes, we may be arrogant and brag without even realizing it. One day, a great companion of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ named Ṣaʿṣah fell ill. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ personally went to his home to visit him.

As Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was leaving, he knew what was in the heart of Ṣaʿṣah, so he offered him some very useful advice. He told him: *"O Ṣaʿṣah! My visit (to you) was my responsibility. Let it not be something which causes you to brag to others."* Ṣaʿṣah told him: *"No, O Commander of the Faithful (Amīrul Muʿminīn)! Rather I consider this to be a reward for my Hereafter."* [4]

Being visited by any Imām of the time ﷺ is surely a distinct honor, however this should not become a cause of arrogance or boasting.

BRAGGING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media makes it easy for people to highlight what they think is the best part of their lives. People can easily use social media to brag about different things—whether it be about their material possessions, their attributes, and/or their accomplishments. Activities which lead to bragging might be subtle. For example, they may post a picture because they bought something new, wore an elegant outfit, did well on a test, or went on an extravagant vacation.

4 Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī*, P. 347.

Activity 2.2b: Bragging and Social Media

1. What are some types of pictures that may actually be constituted as bragging on social media?

   a. What commonalities do you notice amongst these types of pictures?

   b. Do any of them seem less than perfect? Why do you think that is?

2. What are some posts that may actually be considered as bragging on social media?

   a. What are some commonalities you notice amongst posts that brag on social media?

   b. If our purpose in life is to try to get closer to Allah ﷻ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, then what are some ways we can be more thoughtful about what we post?

Write down some criteria with various reasons should you decide to post something on social media, if anything. Keep this criteria in a place that you will remember to refer to the next time you post or browse on social media.

CONSEQUENCES OF BRAGGING

Some consequences of bragging are that it can turn people away from us; it can also give us a false sense of superiority. We can easily overestimate our abilities, and forget to notice our own mistakes and shortcomings. This will set us up for failure. For example, if someone thinks they are so smart that studying is unnecessary, the lack of studying might actually make them perform worse than their true potential on a test because they became over-confident of themselves.

When we ignore our own faults, we then overlook the chance for self-improvement. We not only distort our self-image, we may also lose the chance to fulfill our purpose in life which is getting closer to Allah ﷻ by becoming the best version of ourselves.

HOW TO LIVE A MORE HUMBLE LIFE

- **Reflection:** If our ultimate goal in life is to become closer to Allah ﷻ by reaching perfection, then we must exhibit traits that will help us reach this goal. If we realize that we have these traits of self-conceit *(ʿujb)* and bragging, then we should reflect on our actions and thoughts each day, and try to humble ourselves.
- **Remember Allah ﷻ (Do *Dhikr*):** We should remember Allah ﷻ whenever we develop a moment of pride within us. For example, if we feel conceited about how smart we think we are, then the next time we have this thought, we should say to ourselves: *"Alḥamdulillāh*—if Allah ﷻ did not give me the ability to do this, then I could not have done it." Therefore, the first thing we should do when we achieve something good is to thank and praise Allah ﷻ. Just by saying *"alḥamdulillāh,"* we acknowledge that in reality, we are not capable of doing anything good on our own. Whatever good we achieve is actually from Allah ﷻ and we must give credit to Him for all the goodness and blessings that He continues to shower upon us. If we want to brag to someone about a talent of ours, then we should say: *"Astaghfirullāh*—I sent repentance for this thought of mine, and then remember that all of our abilities are from Allah ﷻ.
- **Supplicate (Do *Duʿāʾ*):** We should always ask Allah ﷻ to help us get rid of these negative traits of pride, self-conceit, boasting, etc., and to keep us from developing these lowly characteristics. There are several lines in various *duʿās* that can also remind us to be humble. For example, in *Duʿāʾ Kumayl*, we say: *"And how much beautiful praise, for which I was unworthy, You have spread around (about me)!"* In this line, we acknowledge that it is Allah ﷻ who spreads the praise of us amongst people, such that people love us and our traits, even though we are not deserving of this. Only Allah ﷻ is truly deserving of praise, and all of our good qualities come from Him.
- **Reflect on What We Own:** To avoid bragging about something that we own, we should carefully look at how attached we are to that thing. For example, would we be upset if we lost a favorite sweater or video game console that we bought? If the answer is yes, then we need to take time and reflect why we are attached to that item. Even if something is inexpensive, we should not be attached to those things which we own, or think that they add value to us or to others.

- **Be Vigilant:** If we truly want to get closer to Allah ﷻ, then we need to make sure that we follow the best conduct in every aspect of our lives, including social media. We should always ask ourselves why we are posting something, and who we are hoping will see it. We should be confident that Allah ﷻ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ are aware of our accomplishments; and thinking about them should make us feel thankful, not arrogant. It might be better to keep a certain picture to ourselves, and maybe our close family members; and to hide our personal accomplishments and maintain privacy in them. This is especially true if it could make you become arrogant, or cause others to feel saddened.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can you act on the advice above to live a more humble and conscious life? Think about one specific change you would like to make in your own personal life.

KEEPING A BALANCE

Even though humility *(tawāduʿ)* is a praiseworthy quality, at times, the desirable form of humility is misunderstood.

Tawāduʿ does **not** mean to humiliate ourselves before others, especially if we want some worldly gain. For example, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"A person who respects a rich person and humbles oneself before them only because of their richness, loses one-third of their religion."* [5] Other *aḥādīth* also tell us that a person who bows down before a rich man only because of their wealth, will find their own faith melting away like salt dissolves in water.

When a true believer *(muʾmin)* is humble before others, it is a real feeling of being humbled in the presence of Allah ﷻ. It is not a feigned humility in order to gain favor in other people's eyes, like a salesperson who praises a potential product in order to win a business deal. Nor is it because of showing false respect to someone just because they are famous, rich, or influential.

Another condemned form of humility is when a person feels so low that they lack any self-respect or dignity. This is a trick of the Shayṭān that can lead to someone not caring about self-improvement, and feeling like life is worthless. *Tawāduʿ* means to acknowledge what Allah ﷻ has given us **exactly for what it is.** Human beings are the most dignified of Allah's creation, and it is wrong for any human being to think of themselves as undignified or insignificant.

5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 70, Pg. 89.

CONCLUSION

A humble person is one who constantly gives thanks, and attributes their positive traits to Allah ﷻ. This person realizes that without Allah's blessings, they would have nothing and be nothing. Thus, a humble person does not hold oneself in higher esteem than anyone else because they acknowledge the fact that everything they are or have is from Allah ﷻ alone. Humility gives an individual the ability to look beyond one's own self and appreciate and respect others. This in turn, results in appreciating others, elevating one's position in the eyes of Allah ﷻ, and creating a loving and kind relationship with one another.

When a person is not humble, they begin to feel arrogant, which then externalizes itself in the form of bragging. In order to avoid the root, *ʿujb* (self-conceit), from developing within a person, one must remember that all traits and accomplishments are not from the individual, but rather from Allah ﷻ. One could lose everything in a split second.

Think about a basketball player whose playing career could end overnight due to an injury; or a scientist or mathematician whose work/research could be finished in an instant due to a brain disease. This recognition of one's own weaknesses and neediness before Allah ﷻ can keep a person humble and give perspective.

A person who realizes that Allah ﷻ is responsible for all of the blessings is less likely to become arrogant or feel the need to brag. Instead, they will be grateful to Allah ﷻ and dedicate their efforts toward using these blessings to serve Him and His creations, and attain nearness to Him.

FORMS OF HUMILITY
DO NOT
HUMILIATE
yourself in front of others, especially for worldly gains.
DO NOT
DEGRADE
yourself and feel so low that you lack dignity or any self-respect.
PRACTICE
HUMILITY (TAWĀDUʿ)
Constantly thank Allah (swt) and attribute your positive traits to Him.

Activity 2.2c: My Strategies for Living Humbly

1. Reflect on what you are most grateful for. Write a list below with as many things as you can think of in three minutes.

a. Read the list, are the blessings you have greater than this? How much greater?

2. What are your greatest talents, or things that you are the most proud of (it can be good pride)?

a. Could you do these things without the permission of Allah ﷻ, or if He did not give you the ability to do them?

3. If you have any social media accounts, what do you post on them?

a. Would it make a difference if you stopped posting?

Discuss any thoughts you have about this activity with the class.

2.3 Anger

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain what anger (*ghaḍab* in Arabic) is, why Allah ﷻ created us with it, and what it means to have a balanced form of anger *(ghaḍab).*
- List some of the negative spiritual and social consequences of anger, and the positive benefits of controlling one's anger.
- Apply some practical ways of being able to control our anger.

WHAT EXACTLY IS ANGER (GHAḌAB)?

Anger is often framed as an evil trait that we should try to completely rid ourselves of. But is anger inherently evil? Anger stems from a power within our soul known in Islamic terminology as *ghaḍab*, and refers to 'the instinct to deflect things which are harmful, dangerous, and unpleasant.' *Ghaḍab* is responsible for many good things that human beings do, such as showing courage in times of fear, defending the innocent in times of oppression, and even being competitive in a healthy manner. Without this faculty of *ghaḍab* which Allah ﷻ has endowed everyone with, human beings could easily be taken advantage of, since they would not have the will to defend themselves against adversaries. Anger stems from our *fiṭrah* (our inner nature and programming) and displays itself in the form of many positive emotions such as zeal, passion, and even anger (when used for a beneficial purpose). As we have learned, our *fiṭrah* is pure—so everything it contains must have a purpose—even anger. What matters is how we direct our passion, zeal, and anger, and whether what we feel strongly about is for the sake of Allah ﷻ or something other than the Almighty.

Everything, including emotions, has a distinct purpose. If we use a particular tool for the actual purpose that it was made for, then it will be beneficial; but if we use it out of place or for the wrong purpose, then it will be extremely detrimental. Take for example, a knife. A knife is a useful tool that enables a person to cut fruits and vegetables. However, if one is not careful with a knife, then one can accidentally injure oneself or others. Sometimes, it can be used to stab or even kill human beings. Therefore, a knife is beneficial if it is used under careful and controlled conditions.

The faculty of anger that Allah ﷻ has placed in individuals can be beneficial if one uses it to stop injustices and oppression. If a person is able to stop oneself from acting recklessly when angry, then this anger (and one's mastery over it) can help develop a person into a better human being. On the other hand, when left unchecked, anger can result in spiritual flaws such as: being a person who is usually angry and irritable, always complaining, never satisfied, swearing a lot, and always holding grudges. It can also open the door to other vices such as: arrogance *(takabbur)* and jealousy *(ḥasad).*

One of the keys to self-development and reformation of the soul is to channel your anger properly and in the correct manner under different circumstances.

GHAḌAB: The instinct to deflect things which are harmful, dangerous, and unpleasant.

Activity 2.3a: Charting

What are some things we find harmful, unpleasant, or dangerous that we have anger toward?

Complete the chart below with some examples. One example has been provided for you.

SOMETHING THAT IS DISLIKED	IS ANGER IN THIS SITUATION POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?	EXPLANATION
Cheating	Positive	Cheating is harmful to the person who cheats and is unfair to others. Our inherent sense of injustice tells us to not find cheating acceptable.

DEFICIENT ANGER

STOP AND REFLECT: Imagine if Allah had not given us the ability to feel anger or passion about fixing something that is apprehensible. How would we react when we saw someone being oppressed?

Having deficient anger can cause us to have many different problems, some of which include:

- laziness
- cowardice
- misplaced fear
- love of comfort

A common factor in all of these is not feeling repulsion toward what we should be angered by. When we see oppression in the world, for example, we should feel anger toward the oppressors even if we are not able to do anything about it physically. We should at least pray that those people are relieved of their hardships and that the oppressors are destroyed. Why do some individuals feel unmoved when they learn about the tyranny that is happening to people all over the world? This could be due to a hardness of heart that one has acquired because of sinning or being overly indulgent in one's own comforts. Another thing we should always supplicate for is the return of our 12th Imām ﷺ.

Deficient anger can also lead to misplaced fear, or fear of things that should not cause us fear. We might be scared that something bad will happen without reason, or we fear dead bodies, or are afraid of the dark. We might have an excessive fear of death to the point where we do not even want to think about it, which could prevent us from preparing for it properly. We might always be anxious or worried about things that may never really happen, and things we should be somewhat confident about.

Having a deficiency in anger can also lead us to lack a sense of dignity and self-worth. This is especially a problem because as believers, we should have a sense of dignity for ourselves even though we live in a society with others who have different values and practices. We should be strong internally to be able to resist acting or dressing the way others do, or to cave into social pressure when doing so is not in line with Islam.

In order to avoid deficiency in anger, there are certain things that a person can do, some of which include the following:

- Try to regularly participate in the Friday Prayers *(Ṣalātul Jumuʿah)* where the *imām* reminds us about current affairs.
- Remember the tragedy that occurred on the Day of *ʿĀshūrāʾ* in order to keep our hearts alive with a strong sense of identifying with the oppressed.
- Keep in mind and align ourselves with the mission of the Imām of our time ﷺ to bring worldwide justice.
- Pray for the oppressed in our supplications *(duʿās)* every day when possible.

These actions, along with being aware of what is happening around the world, and reflecting on our own actions, will help us become more balanced.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF ANGER

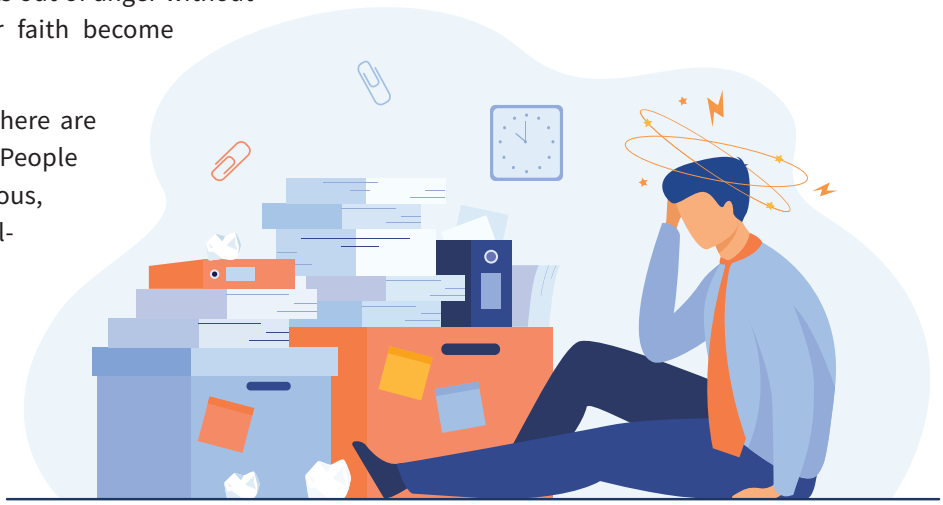
STOP AND REFLECT: What is the connection between improper anger, arrogance, and jealousy? Why might one lead to the other?

Anger *(ghaḍab)* becomes a sin and is forbidden *(ḥarām)* in any situation where we are supposed to demonstrate *ṣabr* (self-restraint and patience), but instead we react in an angry way by lying, injuring or belittling someone else, or shouting loudly in a way that troubles or frightens those around us.

Some of the negative consequences of improper anger are:

1. **Key to All Evils:** Someone whose anger is unchecked can easily go on to committing other evil deeds, such as: backbiting, striking or hurting other individuals, slandering people, using foul language, and so on.
2. **Loss of Humanity:** Human beings are supposed to be different from animals, but by having improper anger, they become just like predatory animals and lose their humanity. For example, wolves will maul or kill animals even when they do not need to eat them.
3. **Hidden Flaws are Exposed:** In a state of rage, people often demonstrate their hidden prejudices or self-centered perspectives. The worst of them will often come to the forefront.
4. **A Flame from the Fire Within:** Anger when demonstrated on the outside stems from anger inside, and unjustified anger inside could be a manifestation of the fire of Hell.
5. **Beginning of it is Insanity, End is Regret:** Those who are in a state of anger are similar to those who have lost their sanity, and later on, when they come out of the fit of rage, they often regret the actions which they performed while they were angry.
6. **Ability to Think Rationally Disappears.** When a person is in a state of anger, often they are no longer able to think things through rationally and may perform some actions that they will be remorseful about afterward.
7. **Faith *(imān)* is Diminished.** A person who acts out of anger without proper justification, could risk having their faith become lessened.

Beyond these negative spiritual consequences, there are social consequences to unjustified anger as well. People who are known to have a bad temper, be obnoxious, and/or frequently cause scenes tend to not be well-liked or popular. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ instructs us: "*Live amongst people in such a manner that if you die they weep over you, and if you are alive they crave for your company.*" [1]



1 Nahj al-Balāghah, Short Saying #10.

POSITIVE RESULTS OF CONTROLLING ONE'S ANGER

The trait of being able to control one's anger is called *kāẓimul ghaydh*. The Qurʾān describes those who possess God-consciousness *(taqwā)*—the *muttaqīn*—as having the trait of *kāẓimīnul ghaydh*—"those who suppress their anger."[2]

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"The best thing that a person can swallow for the sake of Allah is to swallow one's anger."* [3] Imām al-Bāqir ؑ said:

> "A person who swallows one's anger, even though one is capable of acting upon it, Allah will fill their heart with peace and faith on the Day of Judgment." [4]

PRACTICAL WAYS OF TREATING ONE'S ANGER

1. Carefully monitor your actions, in particular the way you treat others. This will help you understand the extent to which improper anger can influence the choices you make.
2. Learn about the negative worldly and spiritual consequences of anger, and carefully reflect over the gravity of these consequences.
3. Study the positive worldly and spiritual benefits of controlling one's anger, and carefully reflect over the wondrous nature of these benefits.
4. Whenever you feel anger developing:
   - **a)** Recite: *"Aʿūdhu billāhi minush shayṭānir rajīm."* Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And if there comes to you from Satan a temptation to disturb you, then seek the protection of Allah. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."* [5]
   - **b)** Do something to modify the situation. The *aḥādīth* give us examples of how this should be done. If you are standing, then sit down; if you are sitting, then lie down or stand up; place your head on the ground in prostration; or leave the room or area that you are in which is aggravating you.
   - **c)** Do not speak when you are angry or make any emotional decisions. Instead, remain silent and excuse yourself until the rage has subsided.
   - **d)** Remind yourself about the Power of Allah ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ said to Imām ʿAlī ؑ: *"O ʿAlī! Do not get angry! But if you get angry, then sit down, and ponder upon the Power of the Lord over His servants, and His forbearance (ḥilm) with them."* [6] There are many times where the servants of Allah ﷻ disobey Him despite being aware of His commands. Yet, Allah ﷻ is forbearing despite His knowledge of their sinfulness. We can learn from His forbearance and be forbearing toward others as well.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 134.
3 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, P. 286.
4 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 305.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (41), Verse 36.
6 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, Vol. 1, P. 13.

Activity 2.3b: Skits

Read the section above on **"Practical Ways of Treating One's Anger."**

In a group, act out one of the ways that you might try to deal with excessive anger.

Start by outlining your skit using the questions below:

1. Which practical way have you chosen to act out? Why?

2. How do you plan to bring this practical solution to life? Outline 3-4 components that you plan to include to really drive the message across.

Use the rubric below to guide your skit creation.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Understanding of Topic	Information was inaccurate and/or off topic.	Information was somewhat accurate, but could have been more to the point.	Information was accurate, but somewhat demonstrated a lack of understanding.	Information presented was accurate and indicated a clear understanding of the topic.
Cooperation	Group did not demonstrate effective teamwork and/or cooperation.	Students were unwilling to compromise, and not all of the team members contributed.	Students were mostly willing to accept others' ideas, had positive interactions, and most of the members contributed.	Students were able to accept others' ideas and all of the members contributed.
Presentation	Final product lacked confidence and was not very informative or engaging. Characters mumbled and body language was lacking.	Final product was somewhat informative and slightly engaging, but hard to hear.	Final product was informative and displayed confidence, but lacked engagement. Students spoke somewhat clearly, but body language could have been stronger.	Final product displayed confidence, was informative and engaging. Characters spoke loudly and clearly with appropriate body language.

POST-SKIT REFLECTION:

1. Do you think your skit achieved the goal? Why or Why not?

2. Which of these ways do you think is most plausible for you to apply in your daily life?

Activity 2.3c: Discussion

Discuss the following with a group or partner. Use specific examples or resources from this lesson where applicable, and write down your answers

1. Is it advisable to completely unroot one's anger?

2. What are some of the negative consequences of having uncontrolled anger?

3. How might Hollywood movies and/or video games promote or reward negative expressions of anger in our society?

   a. How do they want us to speak to our family (for example, our parents and siblings)?

   b. How do they want us to feel about religion?

   c. How do they want us to resolve problems?

Activity 2.3d: My Strategies for Anger

1. We talked about good anger, which can include resisting the need to fit into the dominant culture when it is in conflict with Islam; and helping those in need when we can. What are some ways you want to work on incorporating appropriate anger in your life?

2. What are some situations where you get excessively angry?

3. What strategies do you plan to use in each of the situations you listed above to keep from becoming angry unnecessarily?

4. For the next week, write down when you became angry, and how you handled your anger. Then, try to find the root reasons of why you became angry. You will not be sharing this with others.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT

5. **End of the Week Reflection:** How did your strategies help? How can you improve on them in the future?

CHAPTER 3

Family and Friendships

3.1 Caring for our Parents as Adults

3.2 Friendships

3.1 Caring for our Parents as Adults

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the importance of loving and caring for our parents through various verses of the Qurʾān.
- Explain the rights of our parents over us even after death.
- Apply the advice given in this lesson in our daily interactions with our parents.

LOVE OF PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

When we think of our parents, many different memories come to our mind. The most important thing however is understanding that they should be the center of our family. As we learned in grade 9, our family is like our own little world, with many parts working together simultaneously, and to truly understand how to care for our parents as adults, it is essential to understand our role toward our parents as youth.

Parents not only want us to be happy in this world, but also the next. Even when we are fully grown up, and have our own families and children, our parents will continue to advise us and worry about us.

This is shown in the following verse of the Noble Qurʾān: *"We have enjoined the human being to be kind to one's parents. Their mother carried them in travail, and bore them in travail, and their gestation and weaning took thirty months. When they come of age and reach forty years, they say: 'My Lord! Inspire me to give thanks for Your blessing with which You have blessed me and my parents; and that I may do righteous deeds which please You; and invest my descendants with righteousness. Indeed, I have turned to you in penitence, and I am one of the Muslims.'"* [1]

This verse indicates that there are many rights which our parents have over us, and there are a multitude of reasons to always be kind to our parents.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some of your fondest memories from your childhood? Think about this memory from your parents' point of view. How might it be different?

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ distinctly mentions the rights of parents in his Treatise on Rights *(Risālat al-Ḥuqūq)*. He says:

"The right of your mother is that you know that she carried you where no one carries anyone, she gave to you the fruit of her heart that which no one gives to anyone, and she protected you with all of her organs. She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate; if she was thirsty as long as you drank; if she was naked as long as you were clothed; if she was in the sun as long as you were in the shade. She gave up her sleep for your sake, she protected you from heat and cold—all in order that you might belong to her. You will never be able to show her gratitude, except through the help of Allah and Him giving you success.

The right of your father is that you know that he is your root. Without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself which pleases you, know that your father is the root of its blessing upon you. So praise Allah, and thank Him in that measure. And there is no strength save in Allah." [2]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥqāf (46), Verse 15.
2 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 15, P. 201.

Activity 3.1a: Comic Strip

Create a minimum of a five box comic strip summarizing the rights of your parents as described in *Risālat al-Ḥuqūq.* Your comic must depict a conversation/dialogue between two characters.

Use the rubric below as a guide.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/ or had no sources.	Some of the graphics were related to the topic, and some of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic and made it easier to understand. Most of the graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Project presented was somewhat creative, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose and lack quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

WHEN PARENTS GROW OLD

STOP AND REFLECT: What changes are you noticing as your parents are getting older? What new appreciation do you have for them now that you are also growing up?

The Qurʾān talks about this in several places. For example:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِن بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً ۚ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ.

"It is Allah who created you from [a state of] weakness, then He gave you power after weakness. Then, after power, He ordained weakness and old age: He creates whatever He wishes, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful." [3]

وَمَن نُّعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ۖ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ.

"And whomever We give a long life, We cause them to regress in creation. Will they not then use their intellect?" [4]

STOP AND REFLECT: What are 3-5 specific ways in which some people's abilities regress as they grow old?

Once, while conversing with Allah ﷻ, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ requested the Almighty: *"O Lord! I desire to meet the person who will be my companion in Paradise."*

Jibrāʾīl descended and informed him that his companion will be a butcher who lives in a certain place. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ set out in search of him, and arrived at his shop. He noticed a youth—resembling a night watchman—busy selling meat.

When night fell, the youth took some meat and proceeded toward his house. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ followed him until they reached there.

The Prophet ﷺ approached the youth and said: *"Would you like to have a guest today?"* The youth willingly agreed and took him inside. Prophet Mūsā ﷺ watched as the youth prepared some food. When he finished, he brought down a large basket from the upper floor. From inside of it, he brought out an old and wizened woman, he washed her, then proceeded to feed her with his own hands. When the youth was about to carry the basket back to its original place, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ noticed the old lady's lips move as she mumbled something incomprehensible. The youth then brought food for him, and both of them ate their dinner. Mūsā ﷺ inquired: *"What is your relation with this old lady?"*

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verse 54.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yāsīn (36), Verse 68.

The youth replied: *"She is my mother, and since our financial state does not allow me to purchase a servant to look after her, I myself strive to serve and look after her."*

Mūsā ﷺ further questioned him: *"What did your mother mumble before you took her upstairs?"*

He responded: *"Whenever I wash her and feed her, she prays for me and says: 'May Allah forgive you, and place you in the company and rank of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ in Paradise.'"*

Hearing this, Prophet Mūsā ﷺ said to him: *"O youth! I give you glad tidings: Allah has accepted the prayers of your mother, and Jibrāʾīl has informed me that you will be my companion in Paradise!"* [5]

From this story, we see that caring for our parents may be very difficult for us at times. This youth had to work, then take care of his elderly mother since he did not have the money to hire someone to help them out. Yet, we see the unconditional love between that parent and child. The son went through many hardships to help his elderly mother, and she, in return, prayed for her son due to his sacrifices; and we see the reward for such love is that he was going to be rewarded with being the neighbor of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ in heaven.

A lot of times, adults will lose patience with their old parents and fight with them, break relations, or even abandon them and leave them on their own. One of the main reasons why this happens is because as parents get older, they often lose some of their physical and mental abilities. This might make it more difficult to look after them or help them. At this stage of their lives, it is important for adults to remember that these are the same parents who sacrificed so much for them when they were children, and that the least form of repayment is to make sacrifices in return by looking after their parents now when their bodies are slowing down, and they may be feeling anxious, or having a hard time transitioning in to old age. One of the keys—the golden key—to opening doors of many blessings from Allah ﷻ is to help and be kind to our parents.

Islam demands that the more our parents grow older and weaker, although we may grow stronger, we need to be gentler and kinder with them. Allah ﷻ clearly tells us this in the Qurʾān:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِندَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُل لَّهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُل لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا. وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُل رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا.

"And your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents.Should they reach old age at our side—one of them or both—do not say to them (so much even as): 'Ugh!' [6] *And do not chide them, but speak to them with noble words. Lower the wing of humility to them out of mercy and say: 'My Lord, have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was [a] small [child]!'"* [7]

5 Khasrūi, Mūsā, *Pand-e-Tārīkh*, Vol. 1, P. 68.
6 This means even the least bit of an expression of disapproval or irritation.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verses 23-24.

THE RIGHTS OF PARENTS AFTER THEIR DEMISE

STOP AND REFLECT: Have you seen your parents caring for their own parents? How do they interact with them?

The rights of our parents remain even after they pass away. In fact, it is obligatory *(wājib)* to continue serving parents even after they are dead. Those who forget their parents after they die are the same as those who forget them while they are alive in this world. Some of their rights after they die include:

- We should remember them in our prayers and pray for their forgiveness.
- If they have any debts against Allah ﷻ such as missed prayers or fasts, then we should repay it for them.
- If they have any debts with other people, then we should settle it for them.
- We should respect their friends and relatives who are still alive, and keep in touch with them.
- We should not do anything to spoil their name.
- We should pray to Allah ﷻ to grant them a place in Paradise, and to unite us there with them.

The books of prayers and supplications *(duʿās* and *a'māls)* have many things that we can do and recite to ask Allah ﷻ to bless our parents while they are alive and even after they pass away. There is a beautiful supplication for parents from Imām as-Sajjād ؑ in his book, *Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādīyyah,* which can be found online on **duas.org**.

ONE OF THE BEST GIFTS

One of the best gifts which we can give to our parents is to fulfill our responsibilities toward Allah ﷻ in every moment of our lives. When we do this, Allah ﷻ gives extra blessings to our parents, even after they have passed away. When we teach our own children about Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, then *inshāʾAllāh*, our parents will continue to get rewards for being the ones who raised us as practicing Muslims.

Activity 3.1b: Guidelines

Part 1: This lesson consisted of numerous ways in which we must care for our parents, especially in their older age. Summarize a few of these below in your own words.

Part 2: Create goals/guidelines for yourself to ensure that you are able to take care of your parents in the best way possible—both now and in the future. This list you create is your action plan: Something to remind you about your parents' rights in even your angriest of moments. Once you create this list, you can design it, digitize it, or whatever you need to do to have it in a place that is easily accessible for your reference.

Activity 3.1c: Being Good to My Parents

1. What are some examples of things you have seen your parents do for their own parents to help in their old age? Could you do any of these things for your parents?

2. What are you least proud of about your interactions with your parents?

3. What do you think is your strength when it comes to interacting with and taking care of your parents?

4. Keeping in mind your answers to the questions above, analyze your interactions with your parents over the next week. Consider what you could have done differently and how it would have helped the situation. If you acted in what you think is the best way possible, then why is that? Answer the questions below as your **Daily Reflection** for the week.

   a. How were you with your parents overall today?

   b. Did any particular incident stand out? How did you handle it?

c. Would you change how you handled it next time? Why? Do you think there would be a different outcome then?

d. If you did not treat them as well as you would have liked, then come up with an action plan to rectify this going forward.

3.2 Friendships

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review previously learned Islamic perspectives regarding friendship.
- Understand that friendship should be a vessel to bring us closer to Allah ﷻ.
- Define optimism and pessimism, and analyze how they play a role in our friendships.
- Discover the importance of loyalty, but how to limit loyalty in order to maintain a strong friendship.

In previous years, we learned about important Islamic perspectives regarding friendships. Some of these include:

- Friendship is not just about having good times—rather it comes with responsibilities and maturity. These responsibilities include **mutual respect, care, trustworthiness, and forgiveness.**
- We should make a conscious effort to choose friends who will help us **become closer to our purpose** which is to reach perfection. Our friends should be those who genuinely care about us, and inspire us to become closer to Allah ﷻ—people whose interest lies in our well-being, and want to help us in our path to perfection.
- Our friends should not make us feel uncomfortable, or pressured to **act differently** to what is right.
- Part of maintaining good friendships is to know how to **greet each other Islamically.**
- We should be careful when we choose **the people who are in our closest circle.** It is only through experience that we can really come to know what someone is like. At the same time, in choosing close friends wisely, we have to be careful not to become judgmental, or think of ourselves as better than others.
- Sometimes, in order to befriend someone, or be part of a group or a 'gang' or 'clique,' we might have to let go of some of our principles and imitate that group. It is tough to be the only one who says "no" to peer pressure, but we should be able to do it. **Be okay with not following the majority.** What the popular people in a group, or the majority are doing is not always the best option—in fact, at times it can be completely wrong or inappropriate. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān: *"...but most of them do not know."* [1]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 37.

Activity 3.2a: Discussion and Reflection

Part A: Your teacher will assign one of the above points to each group. Work with your assigned group to answer the questions below.

1. How can that aspect of friendship be likened to the foundation of a building?

2. What would happen to a friendship if the quality you have been assigned were missing? Provide a specific example to get your point across.

Part B: Self-Reflection:

1. From all of the points/attributes mentioned above, which do you think are the strongest within your friendships right now?

2. Which ones do you hope to work on, and how do you think this will strengthen your friendships?

In this lesson, we will examine two other important concepts regarding friendship:

- Negativity and toxicity in friendships.
- Loyalty in friendships and its limits.

NEGATIVITY IN FRIENDSHIPS

Think about some of the people you know, and categorize them according to their outlook on various things. You will probably agree that people generally fall into one of three broad categories. Some people are extremely positive and hopeful. They always see the "glass as half full." When trials and troubles come their way, they take them in stride, remain patient, and maintain a good opinion about Allah's management of their affairs, and they still remain positive and optimistic.

They may even take inspiration from our beloved Prophet ﷺ who would see every event—positive or negative—as an opportunity to remember and praise Allah ﷻ; and from Lady Zaynab who saw nothing but beauty, despite being tried with some of the greatest trials.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can your perspective change your feelings about a situation? Think of a specific example in which this has happened to you—and be prepared to share it with the class.

On the other hand, there are people who are negative and pessimistic. It is essential here to understand that negativity and pessimism are not one and the same, because **negativity** often focuses on the **absence of something;** whereas **pessimism** addresses **worst case scenarios.** Pessimistic and negative individuals often see the "glass as half empty." For example, a pessimistic person might see bad weather and say "The clouds are so gloomy, it looks like it will be a bad day." However, just because the weather may become bad, it does not necessarily mean that it will be a bad day. A negative person, on the other hand, would react to a new strict teacher that they got as follows: "There goes any fun we could have had in class this year."

Finally, there are those who lie in between these categories. They tend to be highly influenced by the people around them. They find themselves being positive, energetic, and optimistic when they are around positive people; but when they are among negative people, they too become negative.

It is a well-known fact that we are affected by the people around us. What happens when we are close friends with people who are constantly negative? **There is a high chance that these types of relationships will turn us into negative people.** If we start to frequently have negative feelings in a friendship, it is very important to reflect and think about how the friendship is affecting us. Are we experiencing these negative feelings because of our friends having a negative outlook on life? If this is the case, then we should try to change the situation by encouraging our friends to have a more positive outlook on life. If this does not work, then we might need to evaluate whether the friendship is harming us, and if so, then perhaps whether we should limit the friendship and not remain too close to that person.

STOP AND REFLECT: Reflect on a time when you knew that a particular friendship felt way too heavy for you due to the stress that this friend caused. How did you come out of that situation? If you have never experienced this, then what do you think are some signs of this if it is happening in a friendship?

The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ cautioned us regarding people we may become close to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Keeping company with evil ones can lead to being suspicious, critical, and negative toward good people."* [2] This *ḥadīth* explains to us that the characteristics of our friends can really influence us, so we need to be very careful about choosing the right friends, and frequently reflect on how our friendships are affecting us.

WHAT ARE NEGATIVE PEOPLE LIKE? [3]

Negative people have certain tendencies, some of which include:

- They interpret all events that take place around them to their own detriment.
- They are not good at coping with problematic situations when they arise.
- They are inactive, unmotivated, and lack energy.
- They easily get upset because they consider the words and actions of others to be personal attacks.
- They are often unhappy, and are very hard to please.
- They are afraid of confiding in others to get help with their problems.

These negative tendencies often go against our innate nature *(fiṭrah),* and are a result of specific circumstances within someone's life, such as:

1. **Bitter experiences in life.** For example, shame and betrayal of trust, that have led to an internal sense of negativity and bitterness. For example, if a child's parents are overly harsh and condemning, or if they lack a loving and respectful relationship, then the child can develop a highly negative outlook on life.
2. **Internal spiritual diseases.** For example, jealousy, arrogance, and low self-esteem can lead to someone becoming spiteful and hateful.
3. **Physical deficiencies.** For example, improper diet, sleep, and a lack of exercise can lead to pessimism and negativity.
4. **Deficiency of faith and worldview.** Without a proper understanding of Allah's System of Creation: His being the ultimate Nurturer and Lord *(Rabb),* His perfect Justice, and His control over everything in the universe, some people can interpret "bad events" as being bad luck and feel negative as a result of this.

HOW TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE PEOPLE

Noticing that a friend is feeling down and is more negative than usual is a valuable skill and sign of emotional intelligence. It can be a great opportunity to ask them if there is something they would like to talk about, and/or refer them to someone who can help them with their problems. It is also normal for all people to go through ups and downs, and it is important to support our friends through their tests in life. Luqmān, the Wise, said: *"You will not come to know who your true sibling [in faith] is until you are in a situation where you need them."* [4]

As you can see from the list of causes of negativity above, all of them can be treated and reversed. However, you may come across someone whose negativity is contagious, and who is beyond your ability to be able to help them. In such a case, it may not be helpful, and could even be damaging to break off all ties with them or abandon them. At the same time, we need to protect ourselves, and taking such a person as a close friend could result in the negativity spreading to us.

This spirit of taking care of who a person brings into one's inner circle can be seen in a narration of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ to one of his companions named Junādah: *"When you are in need of associating with others, take the company of one who, whenever you associate with them, they beautify you; whenever you serve them, they protect you[r reputation]; whenever you ask them for help, they help you; and whenever you say something, they believe your words. When you attack an enemy, they strengthen you; and whenever a fault is seen in your efforts, they compensate for it…Befriend one who—on account of them—trials and misfortunes do not reach you."* [5]

2 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, Vol. 1, P. 446.
3 Nia, M. (1965, June). This was part of an article written in Farsi which translates to: *The Way of Life: Positivity.* (Found in the magazine *Ma'ārif Islāmi*).
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 71, P. 178.
5 Malikī Ashtarī, Warrām, *Majmūʿāh Warrām*, Vol. 2, P. 232.

Activity 3.2b: Spin it Around

As Muslims especially, it is important to always maintain hope in Allah ﷻ, even in situations where one may feel as if they are the worst possible scenarios.

Read the below statements that were taken from the lesson above, and rephrase them to be something displaying optimism, positivity, and hope in Allah ﷻ.

1. "The clouds are so gloomy, it looks like it will be a bad day."

2. "There goes any fun we could have had in class this year."

3. Now consider something negative you might say (or have said recently) about a situation you found yourself in. Rephrase it to something positive. How do you think rephrasing it can help change your perspective about that?

   Negative Statement:

   Positive Statement:

Activity 3.2c: Scenarios

Loyalty is an important quality we should look for in our friends. In order to explore what loyalty looks like in friendships, let us explore some scenarios. Look at the examples below, and consider how one might be able to display more loyalty in them.

1. My friend and I used to be very close. However, when the new student arrived, I found them to be a better friend for me, so I stopped hanging out with my old friend.

2. My friend and I have not been in contact for years now, ever since high school. I went off to study at a private university, and my friend has been busy helping her parents in their family business. Recently, when we met at a community gathering, it was slightly awkward, and I could not be very warm with her.

3. I was at a social gathering and some people were joking about a mutual friend who was not present. I shared a funny incident about that friend which made everyone laugh. We were not being mean, and we would have said the same things if our friend was present; however, at times, we were making fun of them.

Now, turn the page to see an analysis of these scenarios.

In the first two scenarios of the activity above, perhaps the friends that the individuals had truly did not reflect the qualities of a good friend, and the events which took place were opportunities to find better friends. However, if they were a true friend, then the actions taken would be considered disloyal. In the third scenario, sharing such negative things about a friend is an example of *ghībah* (backbiting), and the excuse that if they had been present they would have said the same thing is not a valid excuse.

The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ advised us to make good friends who are loyal and to keep hold of them. For example, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Keep close to your old friends, and be wary about a new acquaintance who is not loyal, not trustworthy, breaks promises, and does not hold oneself to any boundaries or commitments."* [6] Similarly, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Choose from everything new and fresh; but from your friends, choose those who are old [due to their trustworthiness already having been established]."* [7]

Despite the importance of loyalty in friendship, loyalty at times can become a hindrance in having a healthy relationship with our friends. Being aware of the **limits of loyalty** will prevent us from doing un-Islamic or illogical acts for our friend. A good friend wants the best for their friend in this world and the next, and at times, being loyal may interfere with being a true friend. For example, allowing a friend to copy your homework when it has been explicitly forbidden by the teacher may demonstrate loyalty because we are giving in to their request, however, this does not serve the purpose of being a true friend as it is an action that will not help them or you succeed.

6 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 12, P. 23.
7 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, P. 416.

Activity 3.2d: Limits of Loyalty

As discussed, loyalty comes with limits because oftentimes loyalty does not equate to a strong friendship.

Complete the table below with examples of limits to loyalty we may face in our daily lives. The first one has been completed for you based on the example above.

Scenario	How does it demonstrate loyalty?	Does it demonstrate proper friendship? Why or why not?
Allowing a friend to copy your homework when it has been explicitly forbidden by the teacher.	You are helping them in a time of need so they are able to turn in their homework.	No, because it is not an action that will help them succeed even in this life because they will not be learning what they need to.
Lying to your friend's parents about where they are because they went somewhere without permission.		
Privately teaching your friend how to correct their *wuḍū'* after you saw them performing it incorrectly.		

CHAPTER 4

Relationships and Etiquettes

4.1 Integrity in Career Choice

4.2 Seeking Advice

4.3 The Shīʿah Youth

4.1 Integrity in Career Choice

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define what it means to have integrity when we choose our future career.
- Learn about different criteria which entail a legitimate earning when deciding on a career.
- Analyze and understand the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ about earning wealth for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some reasons why it is important to gain wealth in Islam?

Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ recited the following in a beautiful prayer:

> *"Allow me to attain my provisions through lawful means; direct my spending toward the gateways of devotion; take away from me any possession which will bring forth pride in me, lead to insolence, or drag me in its heels to rebellion!"* [1]

In this supplication, the Imām ﷺ is asking Allah ﷻ for those provisions which are attained through lawful and permissible means. According to Islam, for someone who has the responsibility of providing for themselves and/or others, working hard to earn a permissible *(ḥalāl)* living is highly commendable and necessary. Earning a livelihood can be a tool to moving closer to Allah ﷻ in both this world and the hereafter. But not all occupations are worthy of pursuing. Nor is working itself the purpose of living—there may be some people who spend their time serving others (like family members), or volunteering, and in doing so they are fulfilling their purpose.

It is essential that we understand what it means to maintain integrity in our choice of a career. Our choice must be one that does not steer us away from our religion, nor entail something that is not permissible, but it must be something that can help increase our rewards and help others as well. Scholars have taught us that anything which distracts a person from Allah ﷻ can be detrimental. This statement can be a guiding factor for us even when making career choices. Below are some questions to consider when attempting to decide on a career such that one maintains integrity in this regard:

- Will this career choice conflict with my obligatory duties? For example, I will not be able to recite my daily prayers within the designated timings.
- Will I be forced to commit actions which are prohibited? For example, serving alcohol to other people.
- Will this career choice prevent me from fulfilling my other responsibilities? For example, my duties to my family or community?
- Will this career bring me closer to Allah ﷻ, or will it be a means of distancing myself from Him?
- Is this livelihood going to bring in a lawful and permissible *(ḥalāl)* income?

1 *Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah,* Supplication #30.

Below are various narrations *(aḥādīth)* by the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ which emphasize the importance of hard work and earning wealth through a respectful career:

1. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"There are some sins that cannot be atoned for through prayers, nor charity, but can only be atoned for through serious efforts put forth in seeking a [ḥalāl] livelihood."* [2]
2. Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ said: *"I toil in farming my property until sweat pours down my face—despite having sufficient wealth—so that Allah, the Majestic, should know that I am seeking lawful (ḥalāl) sustenance."* [3]
3. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"(The state of) Poverty is close to (the state of) disbelief."* [4]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why might extreme poverty sometimes lead a person to renounce their faith? Could this be true for any hardship in life?

HOW HARD SHOULD I WORK?

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"If people had everything already at their disposal, life would no longer be satisfying or pleasurable."* [5]

From historical reports, we understand that the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ would bequeath land and housing to their children, not money. This shows that they wanted to help their children, but also that they expected their children to work and develop the land, not just to depend on a sum of money that they inherited.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"Indeed, the Prophets did not leave any dīnār or dirham (monetary money) as their inheritance."* [6]

Hard work is highly commended, and can help an individual and society in achieving perfection. Part of enjoyment in life comes from identifying our needs and working to seek Allah's provision in order to fulfill those needs. This is part of the system of Allah ﷻ where we have to go after our sustenance *(rizq).* However, any kind of work should never lead us to abandoning our other responsibilities, nor should it not cause us to be so occupied that we turn away from Allah ﷻ.

IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY

For 40 years before the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ began preaching Islam outwardly, he was known for two qualities which he demonstrated amongst his people: truthfulness *(aṣ-ṣidq),* and trustworthiness *(al-amānah)*. Long before he declared his Messengership, the Quraysh (many of whom later on became his staunch enemies) called him *'aṣ-Ṣādiq'* (the Truthful One), and *'al-Amīn'* (the Trustworthy One). In the study of *Akhlāq,* we use the terms *amānah* and *khiyānah* as opposites to one another which mean 'trustworthiness' vs. 'betrayal of trust.'

STOP AND REFLECT: Is being trustworthy a valuable trait in any career choice? If so, then explain why it is so important.

A Muslim's faith, worship, piety, good deeds, etc. are all of no value if one is not honest and/or has no integrity (i.e. cannot be trusted). Being truthful and trustworthy are absolute qualities that a person must have in order to be regarded as a righteous human being.

Just as 'amīn' is one who is trustworthy, a 'khāin' is one who is not trustworthy and is guilty of khiyānah, i.e. betraying someone's trust.

2 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 13, P. 13.
3 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 17, P. 39.
4 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 307.
5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 3, P. 86.
6 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 34.

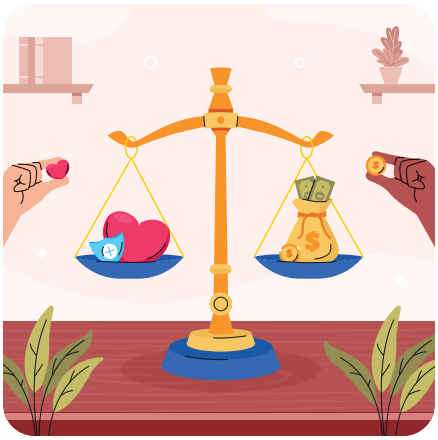
AMĀNAH—TRUST

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ۝

"And those who keep (fulfill) their trusts and covenants." [7]

If a person entrusts something to us, then we must be faithful to that trust and return it to them whenever they want it back. It does not matter what the value of the item is, nor whether the person is a Muslim or not, or if they are a practicing and pious individual; in fact, it does not even matter if the person is an enemy to us.



Let us examine some of the narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ regarding fulfilling trusts:

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Be loyal to trusts even if it (belonged) to the murderer of Imām Ḥusayn."* [8]

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Be faithful to what you are entrusted with even if it (belongs to) the murderers of the children of the Prophets."* [9]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"A person who has no (sense of) trust (amānah) has no faith (īmān)."* [10]

The Prophet ﷺ also said: *"The person who betrays a trust in this world and does not return it to the rightful owner, then they die, dies outside of my religion. They will meet Allah while He is displeased with them."* [11]

NOTE: This applies to someone who willfully does not give the trust back when the other person is asking for their item back and then they die; it does not necessarily apply to one who is holding someone's trust for them, and they die before it is to be returned to the rightful owner.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"I swear that before the Messenger of Allah passed away, he repeated this to me three times: 'O Abul Ḥasan, fulfill trusts to the good and the evil, small and big things, even if it be just a needle and a thread.'"* [12]

Two common misconceptions that people often have are: **(a)** We do not have to be loyal with the trusts that non-Muslims give to us, and **(b)** If someone has taken our rights, then we can confiscate their rights just to get even with them, or in order to recover some of our rights.

As for the first instance, the above narrations clearly show that if we accept to hold a trust from anyone, then we cannot betray that regardless of who the other person is.

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʿminūn (23), Verse 8.
8 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī,* P. 318.
9 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, Vol. 1, P. 217.
10 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 26, P. 198.
11 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, P. 171.
12 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 77, P. 273.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some examples of how a Muslim might deceive or betray the trust of non-Muslims in their business practices? What about their fellow Muslims?

As for the second misconception, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ clarified this by saying: *"Do not betray the person who entrusts you even if they betray you; and do not let out their secrets even if they let out yours."* [13]

In other words, if someone mistreats you, then it does not give you the right or license to commit a breach of trust toward them, nor to lie or compromise on your honesty and integrity. This is because when we lie or break promises or ignore trusts and pledges, then we harm ourselves more than anyone else. We kill a part of our soul, and this is far more serious than anything it does to the person we cheat.

STOP AND REFLECT: As a working professional, how can breaking someone else's trust harm you or your career?

KHIYĀNAH—BETRAYING TRUSTS

Let us now examine a verse of the Qurʾān, as well as some of the narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in regard to betraying trusts:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمَانَاتِكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ.

"O you who have faith! Do not betray Allah and the Messenger, and do not betray your trusts knowingly." [14]

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"If any of four (vices) enter a home, then it will destroy that home, and will never be blessed: treachery (khiyānah), theft, drinking alcohol, and fornication."* [15]

He also said: *"Plotting, deceiving, and cheating are in Hellfire."* [16]

NOTE: This means that anyone who possesses these qualities will end up in the fire of Hell.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ described *'khiyānah'* (betraying trusts and deceiving others) as 'the head of hypocrisy;' and the Prophet ﷺ warned the people that: *"Do not deceive the one who deceives you for then you will be like them."* [17]

13 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 74, P. 96.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 27.
15 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 72, P. 170.
16 Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn Ashʿath Kūfī, *Al-Jaʿfariyāt*, P. 177.
17 *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 9, P. 106.

Revealing or disclosing a secret that is told to you in confidence is also a form of breaching a trust. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Letting out the secret of your (Muslim) brother [or sister] is treachery (khiyānah), so keep away from this."* [18]

When a person betrays a trust and is then remorseful about this, in addition to seeking repentance, one must make every effort to return what they confiscated to the rightful owner. Giving back what was entrusted is part of sincere repentance.

TRUSTS WITH ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER

So far, we have discussed honesty and deceit amongst people. Let us now think about the same concepts in relation to Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. Just to initiate your thinking along those lines, consider the following:

- The body and health we possess are given to us as a loan and trust from Allah ﷻ. One day we will have to return this back.
- The wealth that comes to us is a trust from Allah ﷻ.
- When the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ was leaving this world, he entrusted us with the Qurʿān and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.[19]

18 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 74, P. 89.

19 *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn.* The Prophet said: "I am leaving behind in your midst, two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my progeny. If you fasten to them, you will never be led astray after me and these two shall not separate from each other until they meet me at the pond of Kawthar."

Activity 4.1a: Reflection

Consider the questions above and write down your thoughts below using the questions as your framework. Then you will discuss it as a class.

1. How can you ensure that you are being loyal to the trust Allah ﷻ has given you in terms of:

   a. Your body and health?

   b. Your wealth?

2. What are some things that you do in your daily life to demonstrate loyalty to the two things the Prophet ﷺ entrusted us with?

3. What goals do you have that can increase the trust you demonstrate for the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

INTEGRITY IN ONE'S CAREER

Having integrity in choosing a career and in our workplace involves ensuring that we are very careful in the choices we make, and that we do not betray the trust that is put with us. Here are some examples that demonstrate this nobility:

- Working the proper number of hours that we have agreed to, and not making false claims about the time we spend working in order to earn more money unjustly.
- Avoid using office supplies for personal affairs without first seeking permission.
- Being honest in dealing with others, and avoiding sketchy business deals.
- Refrain from gossiping about coworkers, customers, or anyone else.

Activity 4.1b: Scenarios

Consider the scenarios below of individuals who have the same career. Identify the differences between the two.

1. **a.** A woman worked hard and studied for many years to become a physician. She was inspired by a doctor who was able to guide her father to good health through serious lifestyle changes despite other doctors giving him only a year to live. After many years, she completed her schooling, and then began working her job. Before beginning, she ensured with her employer that she would be taking specific days of the year off for religious reasons, and requested a prayer room to recite her daily *ṣalāh* when she was working. She was also clear with her employer about the boundaries of gender interaction, and the dress code that she would be observing due to Islamic guidelines. During her time at that employment, she got married and had a child. After taking some time off, she came back to work part-time to ensure that she was still able to fulfill all of her responsibilities as a wife and mother as well. Overall, she is a charitable person who lives modestly.

   i. What might be this individual's motive in working hard? What are her top priorities?

b. Another colleague of this woman studied just as hard, and upon beginning her career, she treated herself to some very expensive things such as a gold necklace, and the latest car as soon as she received her first check. She already had plans to move out of her apartment into a fancy condo downtown after saving for a few months, and would work many extra hours to find ways to make more money to buy a luxury beachside cottage. She did not request any religious days off with her employer, and she told her family that she would not miss work for such things or else they may not be happy with her.

i. What might be this individual's motive in working hard? What are her top priorities?

c. What are the main differences between the priorities of these two women? Why are these priorities important?

2. **a.** A man got a high paying job as an engineer. Upon receiving his first check, he donated a large sum of money to the local masjid, and set up recurring smaller payments every month to ensure that he never forgets to share his wealth with the community. He also regularly gives money to his family to help provide for their necessities.

   b. A colleague of this man also got a very good job as an engineer. However, he decided not to give regularly to the masjid because he did not like the idea that others benefit from his hard-earned money. When it came to buying things for himself, he always bought the best products, but was stingy when it came to buying something for his wife or family.

   c. What are some of the differences between the priorities of these two individuals? Why are these priorities important?

3. A woman has a part-time job that she really likes, but it only pays minimum wage. She gets offered a job that involves working 60+ hours a week, but with a much higher pay. She takes care of her elderly parents during the day after work. If she takes the new job, then she will have to put them into a nursing home. Her husband's job is full-time and well-paid.

   a. Should this woman take the new job? Why or why not?

4. A man gets offered a very high paying job, but it involves him to travel every week all year round. He has two small children and no one to care for them except his wife, and he would not be able to take his family with him. His current job involves much less traveling, is not as high paying, but allows them to live a modest, yet comfortable life.

   b. Should this man take the new job? Why or why not?

5. A woman gets accepted into two PhD programs. One is much more prestigious, but it involves studying full-time and is well-known for making its students work so hard that a number of them leave the program each year due to being burned out. The other one is less prestigious, but she would have a much better work-life balance.

   a. Should she take the more prestigious PhD program? Why or why not?

6. A man gets offered a very high paying job at a bank that would change his life around financially as he currently works at a minimum-wage job and has a lot of debt. However, the money that he would earn from this specific position at the bank would be unlawful *(ḥarām).*

   a. Should he take this job at the bank? Why or why not?

7. A man completes medical school and his internship as a junior doctor in a hospital. Throughout his university studies and internship, he has always enjoyed doing community work such as teaching at the local weekend school, and helping out in the masjid. Now that he has finished his internship, he has a choice to make. He can go into a medical specialty that requires long hours of hard work at the hospital, being on-call overnight, and dedicating most of his life to that specialty. At the end of this, he may have the opportunity to serve his community in a special way with a unique set of skills. However, he is also worried that he may lose touch with the community after his long years of training. His other option is to go into a specialty that requires a shorter training period, is less rigorous, and can be done during ordinary work hours. This would mean that he can still be in touch with his community, and volunteer there throughout his career. However, he would not have the same unique set of skills to offer the community later.

   c. Which path do you think he should choose? Why or why not?

Activity 4.1c: Career Choice

Think about your future career options/choices, and complete the questions below regarding one of your potential choices.

1. What are you passionate about?

2. What draws you to this particular career?

3. Are there any aspects about this choice which would force you to compromise on the permissible *(ḥalāl),* and commit some forbidden *(ḥarām)* things?

4. Can being in this field bring you closer to Allah ﷻ, and help you in the hereafter?

5. How might this career take you away from your beliefs, or being able to practice your religion?

6. What can you do, with the help of Allah ﷻ, to try and maintain the integrity in your career choice?

4.2 Seeking Advice

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Analyze various characteristics that we should look at of someone we trust to take advice from.
- Define and understand the rights of those who advise and those who seek advice.
- Define *istikhārah,* and when to use this form of seeking advice.
- Explain how correct advice from a trusted individual is guidance from Allah ﷻ.

When making any major (and sometimes even minor) decisions in our lives, we should seek advice from other people. A well-known principle is that a good advisor should have expertise in the area where they are giving advice. In this lesson, we will go a little further and look at the various conditions that a person who is giving advice should possess. We will also look at taking advice directly from Allah ﷻ with the help of a method called *istikhārah*—seeking the best, and also the optimum times to seek and give advice.

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING ADVICE

STOP AND REFLECT: What kind of a person would you want to seek advice from? Does it change based on what you need to seek advice about?

We know that people who are more knowledgeable and more experienced than us are always in a better position to guide and advise us. This is because due to their expertise, they are able to see many of the consequences of certain actions better than we probably can. Also, we might not be able to separate our emotions from our decision-making process, and sometimes we may not be able to look at things rationally, however they might be in a better position for these. By seeking advice from the right people, we are actually becoming more knowledgeable, and with more knowledge we can obviously make better decisions. Seeking advice demonstrates a person's intellectual and social development. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"A person who consults other individuals who have understanding, shows one's development."* [1]

When we want to seek advice from someone about a major decision, it is most beneficial to speak to a person who is close to Allah ﷻ.

For example, if you are trying to decide on a career path, then someone who does not know about Islam might encourage you to pursue an occupation that is forbidden to engage in. The same can be said about picking a college major, deciding what to spend our time on, and many other things. We should especially remember this when we are asking for advice on whether something is right or wrong.

STOP AND REFLECT: How often do people seek advice by searching online as opposed to seeking it from specific people who may be more knowledgeable? What are the pros and cons of doing this? When is this useful? When could this be a big problem?

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, P. 105.

When it comes to certain things, it might be useful to gather different viewpoints. For example, if we are searching for a product to buy, or which restaurant to go to, we will look at reviews for those things. Sometimes however, we look for advice online whereas it would be better to go to a person to advise us. We might need personalized advice from people who have the same values as we do, and who know us and our goals. Even for products and places to go—a restaurant might have great food, but your friend would know that you would not want to go to a place that serves alcohol. Another example of this is looking up questions about our health online or in a book instead of going to a doctor. We will not get the personalized advice we need if we do this, because online articles do not have our medical history, or the entire picture of our health, or past complications we may have had, etc.—they just give general advice for everyone, and oftentimes it is only from the point of view of their authors, which may not be a holistic perspective.

There are many accounts of individuals who simply made their life that much harder by googling symptoms versus asking their doctor about their health issues. For example, a mother of young children thought her fatigue and tiredness stemmed from her numerous responsibilities every day. She decided to google a remedy for her symptoms which ended up in a serious misdiagnosis as the internet suggested she may have a brain tumor. She immediately called her doctor, but was unable to find an opening until the following week. As a result, her fatigue and stress increased exponentially, because—in addition to her daily stress—she had the stress of a possible brain tumor. After insisting that her doctor perform multiple expensive tests which were not even deemed necessary, results unsurprisingly showed that she did not have a brain tumor after all.[2]

According to an Edith Cowan University (ECU) research paper published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, it was mentioned that: *"Many people turn to 'Dr. Google' to self-diagnose their health symptoms and seek medical advice, but online symptom checkers are only accurate about a third of the time."* [3]

Research shows that 94% of consumers use reviews to guide most of their ordinary purchase decisions. However, due to social influence, reviews are often highly polarized, with many extreme positive and/or negative reviews. The moderate opinions are often drowned out. This means that reviews are not always reliable.[4]

2 Clark, M. (2021, April 14). *8 real-world examples why you should stop googling symptoms*. Etactics. Retrieved July 10, 2022, from https://etactics.com/blog/stop-googling-symptoms

3 University, E. C. (2020, May 17). *Warning: "Dr. Google" is almost always wrong*. SciTechDaily. Retrieved July 9, 2022, from https://scitechdaily.com/warning-dr-google-is-almost-always-wrong/

4 Bassig, M. (2022, June 30). Is online review bias real? ReviewTrackers. Retrieved July 11, 2022, from https://www.reviewtrackers.com/blog/online-review-bias/

WHOM SHOULD I SEEK ADVICE FROM?

Al-Ḥalabi narrates that Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"Seeking advice from others is a virtue. If you do not do this, then you will face great losses. However, there are conditions, and if these are not observed, then the harm for the one seeking advice could be more than the benefit. The first is that the person you seek advice from should have intellect. Secondly, they should be religious and impartial. Thirdly, they should be a (true) friend. Fourthly, you must divulge all of the details to them, so that they know your affairs as much as you do. [This is so that they can give you honest advice based on all of the facts]. The counselor must keep this a secret and not divulge it (to anyone else)." [5]

Imam ʿAlī ﷺ said:

> "The best people you can seek advice from are those who possess intellect, knowledge, experience, and are far-sighted." [6]

Based on these and other verses and traditions, some of the most important conditions of a counselor are:

- Expertise
- Possesses intellect and reason
- Trustworthiness and ability to keep a secret
- Impartiality
- Religiousness
- Honesty

SEEKING THE BEST FROM ALLAH ﷻ

The literal meaning of *istikhārah* is "to seek what is best [from Allah]." *Istikhārah* is a form of supplication. It means that in all affairs, a person sincerely asks Allah ﷻ to make one's path easy, and give a good outcome to them. Total reliance upon Allah ﷻ, leaving all of one's affairs to the Almighty, and having a positive or favorable opinion of Him are all required before one performs *istikhārah*.

It has been recommended that before an individual performs even the smallest act, one starts off by supplicating to Allah ﷻ. In the narrations, it has been emphasized that this type of *istikhārah* should be performed before every action, and is one of the reasons for the success of a person. Seeking out Allah's help can be done simply by turning to Him in our hearts, or by saying: *"Astakhīruh billāh"* (I seek the best from Allah). It can also be done by reciting Imām Sajjād's *Duʿāʾ* #33 in *Ṣaḥifa as-Sajjādīyyah* entitled "Asking for the Best (Outcomes)."

When we seek advice from a trusted individual, we should realize that in reality, we are seeking guidance from Allah ﷻ through the means of that person. This is why the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ mention that Allah ﷻ will put His guidance on the tongue of the counselor whom we seek advice from. We should still think carefully over the advice that is given, and sometimes talk to multiple people if need be. But we should keep in mind that throughout the entire process of making difficult decisions, our All-Merciful Lord is there to guide us if we seek assistance from Him.

There is another form of *istikhārah* which can be done, and that is with the beads of a *tasbīḥ,* or through the Qurʾān. We should do this **only after** there are still doubts and uncertainty in our mind, or when the other ways of seeking the best from Allah ﷻ—such as reflection, weighing out the pros and cons, requesting advice from others—do not give us an indication of how to move forward.

ISTIKHĀRAH: A form of supplication in which a person seeks what is best [from Allah].

5 Al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, Vol. 2, P. 602.
6 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Ḥadīth # 4990.

TREATISE ON RIGHTS BY IMĀM AS-SAJJĀD ﷺ

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to understand the rights of others?

In *Risālat al-Huqūq* (Treatise on Rights), Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ elaborates upon the rights of different things with respect to one another on the basis of Allah's System of Justice, including the rights of leaders, subjects, relatives, neighbors, companions, different body parts, etc. He also describes the rights of those who give and seek advice. Let us examine each of these two in more detail.

The Right of One who Seeks Your Advice

> *"And the right of the one who seeks your advice is that you should exert all efforts to advise them if you can, provide them with a good opinion, and suggest to them to choose what you would have chosen if you were in their place. You should do so with mercy and leniency since lenience will eliminate fear, while rudeness will eliminate friendliness.*
>
> *But if you do not have any good advice for them, then you should refer them to someone else whom you know and trust their advice yourself. You should spare no efforts to guide them toward goodness, and do your best to advise them. And there is no power except in Allah."* [7]

STOP AND REFLECT: In your own words, explain the rights that Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ has mentioned of those who seek your advice. Why do you think these rights are so important?

The Right of One Whose Advice you Seek

> *"And the right of one whose advice you seek is that you should not accuse them when they give you advice that does not conform to your own opinion. It is quite natural that opinions are divergent, and people have various views about their affairs in which they may disagree. You are free not to accept their advice if you doubt it.*
>
> *However, you are not permitted to accuse them of providing you with ill advice as long as you consider them to be of those worthy of consultation. Do not stop thanking them for the thoughts and good advice that they provide you with. If it was appropriate for you, then you should thank Allah for it, accept it from your brother (or sister) with gratitude, and be prepared to act similarly for them should they seek your advice one day. And there is no power except in Allah."* [8]

STOP AND REFLECT: In your own words, explain the rights that Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ has mentioned of the one whose advice you seek. Why do you think these rights are so important?

7 *Risālat al-Huqūq*, Section # 40.
8 *Risālat al-Huqūq*, Section # 41.

Activity 4.2a: Scenarios

Consider the scenarios below. Using the information above, what kind of advice would you give in these situations?

1. Hani is not sure what career to pick. He talks to one of his professors who studied for about ten years on the history of Hollywood movies. He praises Hani for his creative art skills, and encourages him to pursue a career in Hollywood. What should he do?

2. Fatimah is not sure whether to take biology or chemistry for her grade eleven elective. Her uncle tells her to do an *istikhārah* to decide. What should she do?

3. Sarah is having a hard time dealing with her friends, and needs someone to talk to. Her mom asks her what is wrong? Should she talk to her mom about this?

4. Ahmad is almost certain about what he would like to study in college. He is passionate about it, and after ample research has found that it will help him build a stable future. He decides to still ask the advice of a professor who he thinks will push him in the same direction. The professor's advice however, is nowhere close to his thoughts, and in fact, creates more confusion for Ahmad, who is now upset with the professor and thinks that he gave him terrible advice. What should Ahmad do?

5. Come up with a scenario of your own. Remember, if it is a true scenario, to maintain the privacy of anyone involved.

Activity 4.2b: Review Questions

1. What are some of the characteristics of a trusted adviser?

2. Imagine seeking advice from someone who lacks even one of these traits that were identified in the previous response. How can that advice potentially steer a person in the wrong direction?

3. Why is it so important to understand the rights of others when one is seeking advice from them?

4. Explain *istikhārah* in your own words. In regard to the *istikhārah* of the *tasbīḥ* beads or through the Qurʾān, why is it suggested only if there are doubts remaining after the preliminary actions such as weighing out the pros and cons, and speaking to a trusted individual, etc?

5. Think of three people whom you seek advice from the most. What characteristics do they have that draw you to them when you need some guidance?

4.3 The Shīʿah Youth

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recall the meaning of God-consciousness *(taqwā)*.
- Develop strategies to be able to overcome anger, and keep on the path of *taqwā* and good character.
- Understand the verses of the Qurʾān *(āyāt)* and the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ *(aḥādīth)* pertaining to *taqwā*.
- Learn how to become a person who is God-conscious *(muttaqī)*.

There are certain strategies and key points from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ which guide us to being God-conscious—which in Arabic is called *taqwā*. It is important in all stages of life to be able to put these guidelines into practice, and continue on perfecting ourselves as human beings.

In this lesson, we will learn the approach taught to us from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and recognize the importance of Islamic knowledge to be able to become a person who is God-conscious *(muttaqī)*.

In previous years, we learned some of the key elements to become a person of piety.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is *taqwā*? How can a person strive to become a person of *taqwā*?

Taqwā—which is often translated into English as God-consciousness—is a moral attribute where one strives to stay away from sins and obey the commands of Allah ﷻ. *Taqwā* has different levels and criteria for how close people are to the Almighty. These levels include: keeping away from sins; keeping away from doubtful deeds; keeping away from unnecessary permissible actions; and occupation of the heart with Allah ﷻ. It is important to remember that becoming a person of *taqwā* does not happen overnight, but the key is to continue to strive to always better ourselves and obey Allah ﷻ in all that we do.

In order to implement and increase our *taqwā*, Allah ﷻ gave us certain ways to do this, some of these include: Try to attain a deeper understanding and recognition of things (known in Arabic as *maʿrifah)*; by putting us through different tests and trials in our life (known in Arabic as *imtehān* and *balāʾ*); and various kinds of worship *(ʿibādah)* that we must perform. Along with these things, we have many blessings such as youth and health. We must not ever take these blessings for granted, since they are not always guaranteed to be there with us. Our health can go down at any moment, and one day our youth will be gone.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"O son of Ādam, when you see that your Lord, the Glorified, bestows His favors upon you while you disobey Him, then you should fear Him (take warning that His Wrath could turn those very blessings into misfortunes anytime)."* [1]

We continue to be given many blessings by Allah ﷻ all of the time, but we need to use them appropriately and take advantage of them in the correct way while we have them.

1 Various Sayings of Imām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ. (2020, February 2). Retrieved on June 24, 2022 from https://www.al-islam.org/articles/various-sayings-imam-ali-ibn-abi-talib

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

Knowledge can be a double-edged sword. Without it, we remain ignorant and cannot evolve spiritually; but to acquire knowledge and not practice it, blocks us from acquiring more real knowledge and spiritually elevating ourselves. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"A person who increases in knowledge but does not increase in one's detachment from the world, does not increase in anything except one's distance from Allah."* [2]

It is important to remember that when we want to shape ourselves into a person of *taqwā*, then we need to begin by putting our current knowledge into practice. Do not be ashamed of learning and asking questions regardless of your age or circumstance.

IMPORTANCE OF THE QUR'ĀN AND DUʿĀS

We must be very attached to the Noble Qurʾān and try our best to memorize it. Another important thing is to learn the narrations *(aḥādīth)* of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ and implement them into our lives. When we recite supplications *(adʿiyā*—which is the plural of *duʿā')*, it should not just be for the spiritual rewards *(thawāb)*, rather there are so many lessons we can attain from the words of the immaculate ones. Often in life, when a person is faced with challenges or severe difficulties, one will only find solace from the Noble Qurʾān, supplications, narrations of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and from one's faith.

The more of the Qurʾān and *duʿās* you are able to know by heart, the more connected you will feel to the Almighty; and these passages will come to you naturally to guide you in how you react to different situations or difficulties and trials in your life.

Remember that whatever you make an effort to memorize while you are a child or even a teenager, will often stay with you for your entire life. What you try to memorize in your 30s and 40s will be harder to retain. So make the time to memorize as much of the Noble Qurʾān as you can before you grow older.

IMPORTANCE OF BEING CONNECTED TO A COMMUNITY

One of the greatest blessings that we have is the opportunity to be a part of our local Muslim community. These communities teach us several things—first and foremostly allowing us to gain knowledge through the *majālis* (gatherings), lectures, and events promoting the Islamic values as taught by the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Having a sense of community based on Islamic values is important as we have people to remind us, teach us, and guide us to God-consciousness *(taqwā)*. We should build communities that are based on the teachings and love of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, not on culture or ethnicity. By connecting ourselves to such communities, not only are we able to educate ourselves through the right sources, but we are able to have the blessings to be able to learn and then teach others as well.

2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 2, P. 37.

BALANCING OUR AFFAIRS TO ACHIEVE TAQWĀ

The topics listed above are important to develop *taqwā*, however, we also need to have a sense of balance in our own lives. We cannot forget all our other responsibilities and focus on only one task. For example, to recite and memorize the Noble Qurʾān is very beneficial, but we cannot simply focus on that and forget all the other important aspects of our religion, or our obligations and responsibilities that we have to others. Without balance, we will have no benefit to what we are doing.

Our balance should not only be in this material world, but balancing both our worldly affairs and the affairs of our soul. In order to balance our affairs, we need to schedule our time properly and be careful not to procrastinate or waste our time. Every opportunity counts, and we have to seize these opportunities and the time that comes with it.

Allah ﷻ speaks about time and responsibilities in the Noble Qurʾān as follows:

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

"Therefore, when you are free (from an important task), then resume (another task); and to your Lord turn (your) attention." [3]

In this verse, Allah ﷻ is saying that when you are finished with one responsibility and you have free time, then you go forward to the next responsibility or obligation that you have. In other words, Allah ﷻ is describing free time as the time between two obligations or two responsibilities. When you have a responsibility that you are doing and that finishes, then you should move on to the next thing so that you do not waste any time whatsoever.

When we follow this advice and continue to strive in the way of Allah ﷻ, and balance both our worldly affairs and work for our spiritual selves, then we will become successful in this world and the hereafter.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Sharḥ (94), Verses 7-8.

Activity 4.3a: Graphic Organizer

Complete the graphic organizer below in order to find a way to create a sense of balance in your life. Be sure to include both the worldly affairs that are important, and your spiritual endeavors. The first one is completed for you as an example.

Activity	Is this for the Spiritual or Worldly Aspect?	Implementation	Benefit
Learn Arabic	Both because through a stronger understanding of the Qurʾān and supplications, my life will become better and improve.	Spend 30 minutes a day studying from online videos or taking a class with a tutor.	Better reading and understanding of the Qurʾān, the supplications and *aḥādīth* of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

TAWḤĪD AS THE BEGINNING STEP OF TAQWĀ

A person who wants to build and strengthen their God-consciousness *(taqwā)* must understand the importance of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd),* and why it is the primary purpose for which all of the Prophets, Messengers, and Imāms ﷺ were sent. The aim in life for all human beings is to gain true realization *(maʿrifah)* of Allah ﷻ. A person who has *taqwā* will try their best to live by the Noble Qur'ān and the teachings of the Prophets ﷺ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. The Divine Books show that *taqwā* is a requirement of faith and character building.

For example, Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qur'ān:

> *"O humankind, indeed We created you from male and female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (God-conscious) among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."* [4]

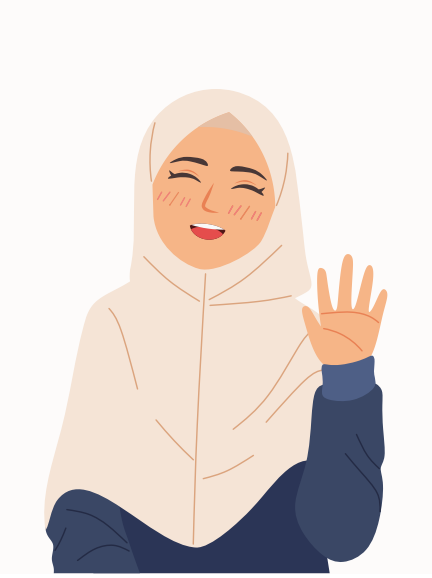
We can see from various verses of the Qurʾān that *taqwā* is a very important concept of faith. It is through proper *Tawḥīd* that we can develop and recognize the steps to improve ourselves and become people of righteousness and true piety. In a *ḥadīth*, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ mentions three levels of *taqwā*: The first is abandoning the forbidden *(ḥarām)* actions out of the fear of punishment, second is to refrain from any doubtful acts, and the highest level is to neglect (certain unnecessary) permissible actions.[5]

Therefore, in order to become a person of *taqwā*, we need to develop ourselves from the ground up. This starts with the concept of *Tawḥīd,* then avoiding forbidden acts out of the reverence of Allah ﷻ. Once we are able to do this and have built up some level of faith *(ʾīmān)*, then we can move to the higher levels of God-consciousness, and develop more spiritual ranks.

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 13.
5 https://en.wikishia.net/view/Taqwa

DEVOTION AND PRACTICE

As previously mentioned, it is important to always put our knowledge into practice. We can only attain high levels of spirituality by going through hardships and implementing more than just the obligatory acts of Islam. *Taqwā* is the prerequisite for a person who wants to live one's life by certain principles—whether they are religious or not—and they have to attain a clear direction in order to move toward a specific goal. In doing so, a person needs to protect oneself against desires that are inconsistent with one's goals and principles.



Thus, *taqwā*—in a broader sense—is a requirement for everyone who wants to be a true human being, anyone who aspires to live under the control of reason, and one who desires to follow Islamic principles. In the religious context, *taqwā* is a quality of those who protect themselves from all that is considered by religion as wrong and sinful. Part of this process—especially in the west—is not easy. Many times, we fear what others will think of us, compare ourselves with non-Muslims, and worry about societal issues. While these things inevitably have a role within our lives, it is important to look at them from an Islamic perspective. Having God-consciousness will build our confidence to levels that we are not ashamed or worried about, for example, praying in the park at the time of *ṣalāh*, or observing modest clothing even when it is extremely hot outside. *Taqwā* enables us to have the realization that everything we do is for Allah ﷻ, and our role models are the Prophets and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ which gives us the courage and advantage to live our lives with true belief, faith and practices—regardless of how difficult it may be at times.

WAYS TO BE STEADFAST IN DEVOTION AND PRACTICES

One of the aims for a person who wants to strengthen one's *taqwā* is to develop a practical routine or method to gain closeness to Allah ﷻ. Aside from learning Islamic knowledge and participating in community events, one can seek closeness to Allah ﷻ and develop God- consciousness through many other ways, some of which include:

- Recitation of the Noble Qurʾān
- Reciting various supplications (*duʿās* and *ziyārāt*)
- Praying not only the obligatory prayers *(wājib salāh)*, but also incorporating some of the recommended *(mustaḥab)* ones, such as Ṣalātul Layl
- Observing recommended fasts throughout the month
- Teaching Islam to those around us
- Developing good morals and character
- Helping out our parents and others in society
- Showing acts of kindness to those around us

Activity 4.3b: Digital Presentation on Taqwā

Choose one of the above methods about ways to become closer to Allah ﷻ, and create a digital presentation on how an individual can use this tool to become a person of *taqwā*.

Use the below rubric as a reference point.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/or had no sources.	Some of the graphics were related to the topic; and some of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand; and most of them had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all of the borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met some of the Islamic Principles, and there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Presentation was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Presentation was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The presentation was not convincing or compelling.	The presentation was somewhat convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function as a good presentation.	The presentation was extremely compelling and convincing.

MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The moral aspect of *taqwā* is very clear in the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. In his famous sermon for the pious ones, entitled *Khutbah al-Muttaqīn,* Imām ʿAlī ﷺ says that *taqwā* is at the top of good manners.[6] Patience and forbearance, observing positive relationships with our relatives, maintaining the trusts of others, avoiding envy, being truthful even if it against oneself, upholding justice, keeping one's promise, staying away from stinginess and ostentation, showing kindness to the weak, being generous, and seeking that knowledge which draws one nearer to Allah ﷻ are mentioned among the qualities of the God-conscious people.

The great renowned scholar and commentator of the Qurʾān, ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī considered *taqwā* a requirement of good thinking, and believed that a person's ability to receive true teachings and beneficial knowledge requires one to be God-conscious. In order to follow this ideology, we need to deal with our relatives and friends with the best manners and moralities. Although it may not be easy to deal with others in a positive way all the time, especially in times of anger, we need to develop strategies to build ourselves and be of those with *taqwā* in all aspects of our life.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE:

With a partner, come up with some strategies to help control one's anger, and prevent additional conflicts from developing with family members. How can a person who is trying to be God-conscious and righteous deal with those people who are around them who are not that cautious? Think of various different strategies that are realistic for someone to use, and be prepared to present them to the class.

Once we develop good manners ourselves and are able to use them on a regular basis, then we will possess the ability to have a positive influence over others. When we learn how to control ourselves and act on a positive note with our families, then we can extend this trait to our friends and colleagues. We must choose our friends wisely; and we also need to be able to have such good manners that we attract other people toward us, and by default influence them to develop a sense of God-consciousness. This includes being a source of light for a friend, but we do not belittle them, rather we encourage them and build them up. Our good morals should not only extend in the relationships we have with our family and friends, but essentially everyone we interact with. People naturally will gravitate toward us if we have *taqwā* because it means that we will act in a positive manner. Smiling, laughing, being polite and kind with those around us, as well as refusing to participate in inappropriate or harsh things will attract others toward us.

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān: *"Say: 'Surely my prayer, and (all) my acts of worship, and my living, and my dying are (all) for Allah alone, Lord of the entire universe.'"* [7]

From this verse, we see that everything we do should be with the intention of gaining nearness to Allah ﷻ. It is important to note that *taqwā* is not only about performing religious obligations such as prayers and fasting, rather it is about living a pious life. Fulfilling our obligations—the things that we are required to do according to the laws of Islam—is the beginning, however, the ideology behind *taqwā* is to continue to grow on this path and become a person with high character and spirituality. Despite where we are at in this journey, we must begin with the intent and motivation to grow spiritually and become a person of piety.

6 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon #193.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6). Verse 162.

Activity 4.3c: Khutbah al-Muttaqīn

Read the *Khutbah al-Muttaqīn* (Sermon for the Pious One) which is #193 in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Write about how having good manners and morals is a leading factor to being a person of God-consciousness.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Focus and Details	The topic and main ideas were not clear.	Main idea was somewhat clear, but lacked supporting evidence.	The main idea was very clear, however supporting evidence and details were lacking.	There was a clear and focused main idea which was supported by ample detail and evidence.
Intent	Author's intent of writing was not apparent.	Author's intent was somewhat apparent, but left the audience with many questions.	Author's intent was strong with a clear purpose, but still left the audience with some questions.	Author's knowledge on the topic was strong and it fully addressed all of the questions.
Accuracy	Content presented was not accurate or compelling.	Content presented contained some misinformation and lacked quality.	Content presented was mostly accurate, and demonstrated quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and accurate.
Teacher's Comments				

Becoming people of piety is not only important for our own selves, but it is very essential for the building and betterment of our communities and societies. In a narration from Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, he said: *"Certainly, consciousness of Allah (taqwā) is a medicine for your heart, sight for the blindness of your spirit, a cure for the ailments of your body, a rectifier for the evils of your chest, a purifier for the pollution of your mind, light for the darkness of your eyes, consolation for the fear of your heart, and the brightness for the gloom of your ignorance."* [8]

Taqwā is most certainly one of the pillars of human life. It is one of the necessary components because nothing else—be it power, money, or law-making—can ever replace it. We see in our current societies that many people are not God-conscious, and have no care or concern about the hereafter. They live their lives according to their lowly desires, and indeed are people without awareness. It is the weakness of faith and the destruction of the fortress of *taqwā* that causes a lot of the oppression and corruption that is so prevalent around the world. When there is no faith and no *taqwā*—take refuge in Allah ﷻ from this state—then people will become more vulnerable and more evil, and may even engage in vile things such as stealing, cheating, lying, deceiving, and many other crimes that are completely unacceptable actions.

8 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Sermon #197.

Activity 4.3d: Review Questions

1. How can we become people of true *taqwā*? Why is it important to understand this concept sooner rather than later?

2. Choose one of the *ḥadīth* mentioned in this lesson and write it down. What did you understand from this narration in regard to living a life of *taqwā*?

3. Name a strategy that can help a person increase one's *taqwā*.

4. How can you encourage a friend who is having a hard time implementing their obligatory actions *(wājibāt)* in their lives?

5. How is having *taqwā* better for the larger part of society?

6. What characteristics does Imām ʿAlī ﷺ say are associated with the People of Piety? Do you have any of these characteristics? Which ones do you think you can begin to implement in your life?

CHAPTER 5

Media and Entertainment

5.1 Media Literacy

5.2 Hollywood: Behind the Scenes

5.1 Media Literacy

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define truth and the source of all truth.
- Define logical fallacies and their presence all around us.
- Explore various examples of logical fallacies and their impact on how we perceive the information that the media presents.
- Analyze logical fallacies, and contemplate how to be better aware of them in the media we consume.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is our purpose in life? How can we get there?

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING THE TRUTH

In the information age that we live in, it is often difficult to distinguish between truth and falsehood due to the sheer amount of information and viewpoints that are available through the Internet. The adjective 'post-truth'—the Oxford Dictionary's Word of the Year for 2016—is sometimes used to describe the world's current state of affairs. It is said that in the post-truth world, the actual truth is not so important. Public opinion can easily be influenced with messages that appeal to emotions, belief, and prejudices, and there is no need to identify or publicize the actual truth. False stories, and stories not backed by any evidence, can easily be broadcast on social media, and there is no trustable, governing body that checks to see what is actually reliable.[1]

What is the Islamic perspective on the truth? Should we accept that we are now in a post-truth world, and no longer need to care about identifying the truth?

1 College, K. C., *Discerning the Truth in a Digital Age*. King's Christian College Blog. https://blog.kingscollege.qld.edu.au/

The Noble Qur'ān says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

"O you who have faith! If a vicious character (person) brings you some news, then verify it, lest you harm some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done."[2]

This verse is addressed to the believers, and is saying that if an evil-doer comes to you with some information, then do not accept it unless you investigate its source. Otherwise, if you do something in ignorance, then you may have done something wrong, and thereafter will regret what you did. Without finding out the truthfulness or source of the information, we cannot just trust that news; and if we do, then we will find ourselves to be among the ignorant.

The Qur'ān also says:

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا ۚ إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

"And most of them just follow conjecture (assumptions); indeed, conjecture is no substitute for the truth. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing of what they do." [3]

These and other verses establish the fact that guesswork and conjecture are not sufficient for taking significant action. We need to establish the truth and then act upon that.

2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 6.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 36.

Activity 5.1a: Read Between the Lines

Take a moment to answer the questions below to the best of your abilities.

1. Define truth.

2. Why does it matter whether you believe what is true or false?

Read the following verses of the Qurʾān, and discuss how truth is used (directly or indirectly) in each one.

- **a.** *"And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in truth (with reason); and the day (whenever) He says [to something]: 'Be!' it is. His Word is the truth, and to Him belongs all sovereignty on that Day when the trumpet will be blown. Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware."* [4]
- **b.** *"And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. Nothing can change His Words, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."* [5]
- **c.** *"O you who have faith! If a vicious character (person) brings you some news, then verify it, lest you harm some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done."* [6]
- **d.** *"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart—all of these are accountable (and will be questioned)."* [7]

3. Based on the meaning of truth that you discovered above, what do you think is the source of all truth?

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 73.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 115.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 6.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 36.

LOOKING AT THE SOURCE OF TRUTH

STOP AND REFLECT: What does it mean that Allah ﷻ is the Truth?

Allah ﷻ is *al-Ḥaqq,* the Absolute Truth. We can never fully comprehend the infinite Essence of Allah ﷻ, but we can approach Him through His Attributes such as *al-Ḥaqq,* the Absolute Truth. He is the Source of all Truth, and everything True comes from Him. This means that the absence of truth—falsehood—will always take us further away from Allah ﷻ. In this world, there will always be people who try to take us away from the truth. They think that the purpose of life is just for enjoyment, or they try to profit off of people getting false information.

In the Qurʾān and the *aḥādīth*, there are many examples of when we should reject certain information, and the importance of seeking the truth. Regarding the verse of the Qurʾān: *"Then, let a person look at (carefully consider) one's food,"*[8] Imām al-Bāqir ؑ said: *"A person should look carefully at the knowledge that they are acquiring, and from whom they are obtaining it?"*[9] Therefore, this means that "food" in this verse is not limited to what we eat for our physical body, but rather, it also includes the information that we feed our minds and souls.

BEING WARY OF FALSEHOOD

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to see where we are getting information from? Why might people try to steer us astray?

In the Qurʾān, Shayṭān is known as *Gharūr*, or the Deceiver.[10] One of the reasons why people commit sins is that they are distracted from the truth and fall prey to the deception of Shayṭān. Sometimes that deception is in the form of false promises of hopes which can never actually be realized: *"He (Shayṭān) makes them promises and gives them [false] hopes, but Shayṭān does not promise them (anything) except delusion."* [11]

Or, the deception can take the form of presenting one's evil deeds as positive or something attractive.[12] An example of this is feeling justified in breaking certain rules in order to achieve some worldly benefit—like the famous saying "the end justifies the means."

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Abasa (80), Verse 24.
9 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 2, P. 96.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 33.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 120.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 43.

People can also act as tools of Shayṭān, and steer us away from the truth. During the time of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ, Walīd ibn ʻAqbah, who was known to be a sinful and impure individual, was dispatched to the tribe of Banī al-Mustaliq to collect the *zakāh* from them and bring it back to Medina. When the people of that tribe heard the representative of the Prophet ﷺ was coming to their village, all of the people rushed out to meet and welcome him into their village. However, without going to meet those who were in charge of welcoming him into the city, Walīd turned around and went back to the city of Medina.

He then told the Prophet ﷺ that the tribe of Banī al-Mustaliq had rejected the teachings of Islam, were not prepared to pay the Islamic tax, and even had the intention of killing him!

After that, the Prophet ﷺ secretly dispatched a person to the tribe of Banī al-Mustaliq to watch over how they conduct the affairs of their religion. It was through this person that the Prophet ﷺ realized that the report which Walīd had brought to him was a lie since, during the time of *ṣalāh*, they were busy in worship and were ready and willing to pay their Islamic taxes.[13] According to some reports, this verse was revealed on that occasion, stating that the word of a sinner *(fāsiq)* [like Walīd] should not be taken, and one should investigate further. *"O you who have faith! If a vicious character (person) brings you some news, then verify it, lest you harm some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done."*[14] This is a general principle of investigating if we do not have a valid reason to rely on the trustworthiness of a person.

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed the hearing, the sight, and the heart—all of these are accountable (and will be questioned)."[15] *ʻIlm*—knowledge—in this context means 'certainty.' Knowing is different than guessing. It has to come from a source of truth. People realize that sometimes things which are believed to be true or correct can eventually be proven false. Information that does not come from pure sources is bound to change over time. This verse encourages us to always be wary of what knowledge we consume, and stay away from blind obedience.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is an example of something in history that was eventually proven to be false after more research?

LOGICAL FALLACIES

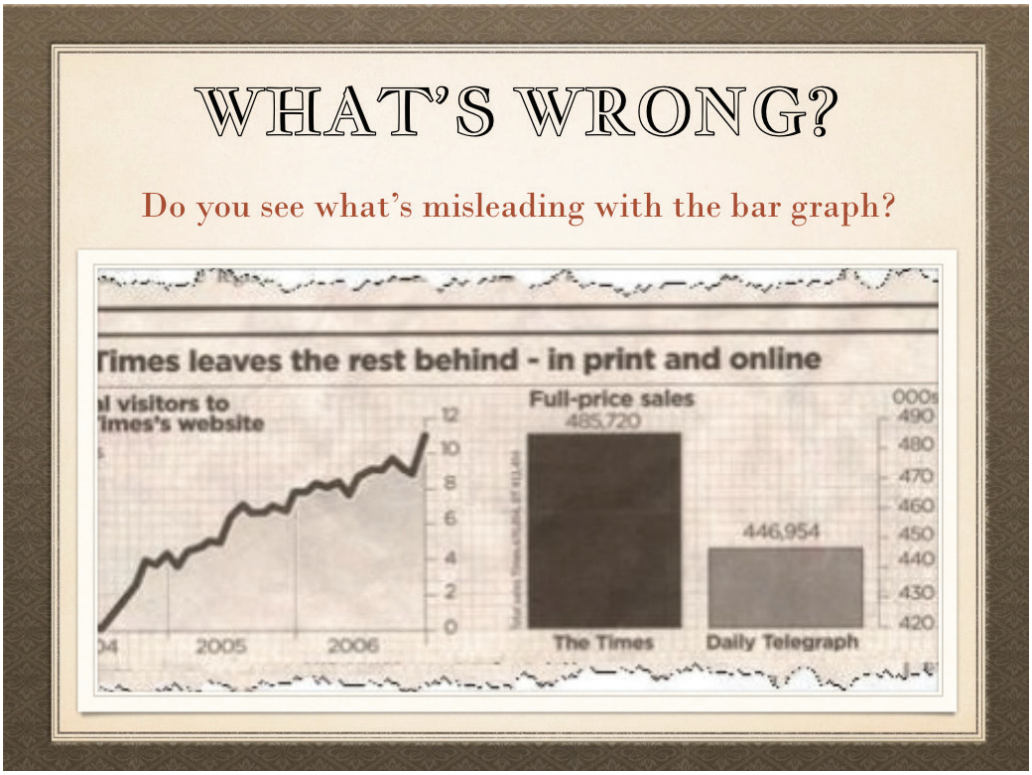
Logical fallacies are common errors in reasoning. You may have learned about some of these errors in school when learning about how to write an argumentative essay or speech. We may not realize that we commonly fall for these fallacies when we consume any type of media, including news, Youtube videos, commercials, political speeches, etc. Sometimes, even our peers use logical fallacies to persuade us to think we are following a good cause.

13 Summarized with excerpts from: https://www.al-islam.org/islamic-moral-system-tafsir-commentary-surah-al-hujarat-49-jafar-subhani/sin-of king-rumours.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 6.
15 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ(17), Verse 36.

Activity 5.1b: Identifying Logical Fallacies

Look at the images or scenarios below, and identify what is misleading about each one. Then use the answers on the next page to check your work with a partner, or as a class. As you go through the answers, be sure to answer the reflection questions.

1.



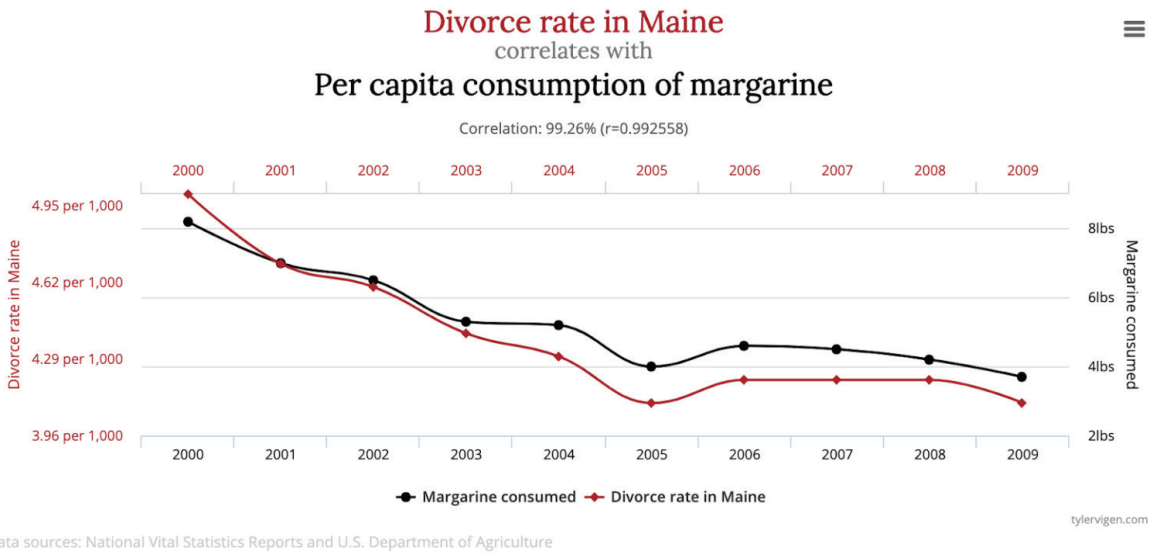
2. Amina is shopping with her friends for some comfortable clothes. Her friend tells her that the jeans which everyone is wearing right now would be the most comfortable for her even though Amina does not like them.

3. Amirah is frustrated with her younger brother who keeps eating the breakfast she makes for herself every morning. When she asks him why, he responds by saying: *"You're not perfect either!"*

4. As part of a campaign strategy, a politician running for president says the government must limit who they allow into the country because they will take over all of the jobs.

5. Consider the following lines from a children's book, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.*
"If you give a mouse a cookie, then he's going to ask for a glass of milk. When you give him the milk, then he'll probably ask you for a straw. When he's finished, he'll ask for a napkin…"[16]

6. Based on the chart below,[17] would encouraging married couples to eat less margarine result in a lower divorce rate? Why or why not?



16 Numeroff, L. J, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.*
17 https://markmanson.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/logical-fallacies-spurious-correlation-margerine-in-maine-1536x750.png

ANSWER KEY:

1. The bar chart graph does not start at zero. By starting at 420,000, it makes it seem like *The Times* is selling twice as much as the *Daily Telegraph*. This is a common tactic used by marketing and advertising teams.

2. This is called "peer pressure" or "bandwagon." It is often used in the fashion industry and by social media influencers.

REFLECTION: Have you noticed when advertisers or influencers use this tactic? What are some specific examples?

3. This is called "against the person" or "Ad Hominem" where instead of responding to the issue, you attack the person. An application of this that can arise for people who are committed to following the practical teachings of Islam is the following: **Person A:** "I do not listen to forbidden *(ḥarām)* music, and I do not want to allow the producers of this music to affect me through their music, as I know it influences the way I think and feel. I want to be free!" **Person B**: "O, that's for *religious* people!"

4. This is called "appeal to fear." Instead of responding logically, it causes everyone to imagine a scary future that would occur if something were accepted.

5. This is called a "slippery slope." One conclusion is supposed to lead to another conclusion without any doubt. However, in reality the conclusions *might* occur, and they might not occur. There is no logical necessity that one should lead to another.

REFLECTION: Imagine if someone were to say: "The Qurʾān tells us that Allah forgives all sins.[18] Therefore I can commit any sin because Allah will forgive me!" What is wrong with this type of thinking?

6. This is referred to as confusing "correlation with causation." Just because two events happen to correlate with each other, it does not mean that one will cause the other.

   This type of fallacy may be used by people who would like to spread Islamophobia to attack Muslims and Islam. For example, in a city which has seen an increased Muslim population, but where the crime rate has also risen, it may be suggested that the crimes are due to the increased presence of Muslims. Although this could be true, it is misleading and dangerous to suggest this causality without evidence. There may be a number of other reasons why crimes have increased, including a lowered budget for the city's police force, the construction of a new highway that allows people from other cities to easily visit this city, or the changing of laws to allow bars to be open later at night (since many criminals are influenced by alcohol, or some by disturbed childhoods, or broken families, etc.).

18 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 53.

CONSUMING MEDIA

When we consume media, we need to think critically about what is being presented to us. Everything that is produced by a person has a bias and perspective, and a purpose for which they made it.

Now that we are equipped with the knowledge of logical fallacies, we can start to think more critically about media and what we are consuming. We also have the knowledge of our purpose in life, which is getting closer to Allah ﷻ. When we align everything that we do with this purpose, we should start consuming media with a purpose as well.

Moving forward, we should note the power of the media to influence our decisions, and use media literacy to be able to critically evaluate different types of media and what messages they are trying to relay. We should be wary of the techniques of Shayṭān, who is aware of his opponents weaknesses and tries to trap human beings due to their vulnerabilities. In some cases, after deep reflection, we will realize that it is better not to consume those types of media that take us away from Allah ﷻ or those which can be highly addictive. We have to remember that marketing companies have huge budgets to try to influence our decisions through various tactics such as repeated messaging, people paid to give positive reviews, etc.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Here are some examples of false understandings that have been spread around, and the effects of this false information on people. With a partner, talk about the harms of these issues becoming widespread. Then share them with the class.

1. Since the 1830's, fad diets including The Grapefruit Diet, The Cabbage Soup Diet, The Sugar Busters Diet, and The Atkins Diet have seen a rise and fall in popularity. These diets have sometimes lacked scientific study and backing.[19]
2. It has been shown that the way beauty standards are presented in American media outlets leads to an increase in low self-esteem; and in some cases, the development of eating disorders in both women and men.

19 https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/the-seesawing-history-of-fad-diets-180981586/

In the 1950s, the Marlboro company wanted to make their cigarettes appealing to men. In order to do so, they created the Marlboro man. A man, who embodied freedom, adventure, and manliness. The company associated smoking Marlboro with masculinity. All men who smoke Marlboro were hard-working and seen as better than the those not smoking Marlboro. Their campaign was wildly successful and eventually led to their becoming the number one cigarette company in the world.

— https://bettermarketing.pub/how-the-marlboro-man-changed-advertising-forever-522086774cf4

Activity 5.1c: Create an Advertisement

PART A: In this lesson, we learned about logical fallacies used to convince individuals to buy products or services. Think about recent ads you have seen on social media, television, and/or magazines. What are some applications of these logical fallacies?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

PART B: Using the logical fallacies that you discovered, and the ones found in this lesson, create an advertisement using one or more fallacies to convince someone to buy your product/service. Use the rubric below to guide your work.

The goal is to be realistic and sneaky so that these fallacies are hard to unearth.

	1 **Ineffective**	**2** **Somewhat Effective**	**3** **Considerably Effective**	**4** **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/or had no sources.	Some of the graphics related to the topic, and some of them had a source cited.	Most of the graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand. Most of the graphics had a source cited.	All of the graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose and lack quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

PART C: Present your advertisement to the class. The audience must attempt to figure out the logical fallacies that were used, and why they were or were not effective in promoting the product/service.

POST-ADVERTISEMENT REFLECTIONS:

1. Which fallacies were the most tricky?

2. What difference did it make since you were looking for the fallacies? What if you were not looking for them?

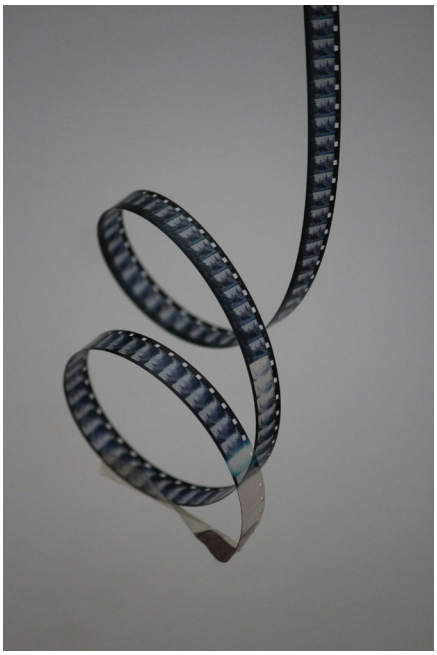
3. Why is it important to understand logical fallacies?

5.2 Hollywood: Behind the Scenes

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define media literacy, and review the importance of being mindful about what we consume.
- Infer what messages mainstream media is sending with ties to specific market industries and special interests.
- Analyze the connections between media industries and anti-religious sentiment.



Media literacy in the context of what we are learning is using a set of tools to think critically about the information that is presented to us. In previous years, we learned the following points regarding media literacy and the entertainment industry:

- Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"Then let the human being observe [carefully] their food."* [1] This verse is telling us to be responsible consumers. However, it applies to more than just the physical food that becomes part of our body. Anything that becomes part of our soul in the form of knowledge and opinions is also necessary to examine very carefully.
- We need to critically think about the information we consume through media and other outlets, and consider why certain content is being created and by whom. In other words, we need to become media literate.
- It is easy to consume media without being thoughtful or critical about what we are watching.

Hollywood, Bollywood, and other entertainment industries play a significant role in influencing society and culture. If we watch television or a movie, browse through social media, or play a video game, we typically interact with the products of these industries for the purpose of entertainment. We are just looking to have a good time or relax. However, in order to be responsible consumers, it is important for us to understand some of what goes on 'Behind the Scenes' in order to produce the content that is popularly consumed in our societies.

In this lesson, we will look at two Behind the Scenes aspects regarding Hollywood and the entertainment industry:

1. The relationship of Hollywood with the U.S. Department of Defense.
2. The anti-religious agenda of Hollywood.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF HOLLYWOOD WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE[2]

Military movies and video games that feature a person who shoots down enemies (known as FPS [First Person Shooter] games) are very popular products in the entertainment industry. Many people might enjoy these forms of entertainment without realizing the close collaboration that these products have with the military. Did you know the following facts about this collaboration?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ʿAbasa (80), Verse 24.
2 This content was summarized and adapted from: Sebastian Kaempf (2019), *A Relationship of Mutual Exploitation: The Evolving Ties between the Pentagon, Hollywood, and the Commercial Gaming Sector.*

- Since the early twentieth century, there has been a strong collaboration between the Pentagon and Hollywood.
- In World War II, famous actors such as Henry Fonda and John Ford, and directors like Frank Capra, made propaganda films that were meant to influence public opinion to support the U.S. military.
- Most American war movies produced in Hollywood over the last few decades have been produced in close collaboration with the military. This includes famous movies such as Top Gun, Pearl Harbor, Black Hawk Down, Transformers, and Iron Man.
- Both sides benefit from these movies. For the U.S. military, these types of movies help to rewrite history and present U.S. soldiers as heroes. They are a powerful recruitment tool which then leads to many young people joining military service. "For Hollywood, collaborating with the military gives them access to billions of dollars' worth of military kit, from helicopters to aircraft carriers, enabling filmmakers to make more spectacular battle scenes which in turn generate more box office revenue—provided of course that they accept the Pentagon's advice, that they toe the party line, and that they show the U.S. military in a positive light." (Kaempf, 2019)
- Popular FPS games can earn 2-3 times more money than popular movies. For example, in 2011, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II* earned $775 million USD within five days of its release, whereas *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Part 2) which was released in the same year earned $202 million USD. The total earnings for the *Call of Duty* franchise was a staggering $21.9 billion USD, compared to the *Harry Potter* franchise at $7.7 billion USD. The military is well aware about the popularity of FPS games, and supports their production in a number of ways. For example, in 2002, the U.S. Military released a free video game called "America's Army" that led to a surge in recruitment of teenagers in their army to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq.

STOP AND REFLECT: Which of the above stats were most surprising to you?

In addition to the close ties these types of entertainment have with the military, they can also carry a great deal of insensitivity toward Islam and Muslims. Within video games, the point is sometimes to cause harm to the Muslims as they are depicted as terrorists. In one specific instance within *Call of Duty,* there is even an Arabic inscription of a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet ﷺ hanging above a toilet.[3] Another example is *American Sniper* which glorifies the life of the deadliest sniper in American history for killing 160 'savages' in his multiple navy tours in Iraq.[4] There is consistent research demonstrating that minorities—like Muslims in most Western countries—are rarely, if ever, represented in mainstream media. It is also unfortunate that whenever they are represented, the portrayal is usually negative. It is important for us to consider the message that is being portrayed within these forms of media, and what lesson our engagement with them can send.

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think we can do to change the general understandings of Muslim identity? How can we reach others and teach them the true way of Islam?

Being conscious and aware about the agendas behind what we consume helps us to choose more carefully what we expose ourselves to. It also helps us to understand how we are implicitly giving in to the messages they are spreading by purchasing, supporting, and praising these types of entertainment. The military's tie to Hollywood is just one example of the many industries such as guns and alcohol that are closely tied to the movies we watch, games we play etc. Therefore, it is very important to be aware of these types of alliances when consuming content.

3 Gaffey, C., *Call of Duty is Islamophobic,* Turkey. Newsweek. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://www.newsweek.com/resident-evil-call-duty-turkey-video-games-islamophobia-629284.

4 BBC. American Sniper film 'Behind the Rise in Anti-Muslim Threats.' BBC News. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-30972690.

Activity 5.2a: Deeper Analysis

Independently reflect on the following quote from Pat Sajak, a famous TV show host who has has been working in Hollywood for more than 30[5] years:

> *"To quote Mr. [Rob] Reiner: 'Movies are basically advertising cigarettes to kids.' No knock on Rob. In fact, I agree with him. But why is smoking open to censorship and not these other issues? And what happened to Hollywood's argument that movies and TV shows don't cause bad behavior, they just reflect it?….The answer is, there is no answer. It's just Hollywood being Hollywood. It's monumental hypocrisy. Kids can't pick up bad habits from what they watch…oh, except for smoking."* [6]

Then, discuss the following questions with your partner or group, and be prepared to share your thoughts with the class:

1. Think about why smoking is one of the few things considered bad in Hollywood when it comes to what we are exposed to on screen. Do you think Hollywood has always considered smoking in a negative light?

2. Why does Pat Sajak describe this as "monumental hypocrisy?"

3. What other industries besides cigarettes do you think have a tight collaboration with Hollywood, but are not as censored? What special interest groups have such a collaboration?

THE ANTI-RELIGIOUS AGENDA OF HOLLYWOOD

5 He just retired this year (2024) from his famous role on "Wheel of Fortune."

6 Sajak, Pat, *The Disconnect between Hollywood and America*, Christian Spotlight on the Movies - ChristianAnswers.Net. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://christiananswers.net/spotlight/movies/discernment/hollywood-america.html.

From 1930-1968, Hollywood adopted a moral code known as *The Hays Code,* which was meant to provide a framework for producers to self-regulate their productions. One of the principles of the Code was:

> *"No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence, the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil, or sin."*[7]

The Code also prohibited the ridicule of religion, scenes of passion, and dances which emphasize indecent movements. In the late 1950s, filmmakers began to defy the Code and produced popular films that were not granted a certificate of approval by the governing agency. Eventually, the Code was abandoned in favor of a rating system.

STOP AND REFLECT: *The Hays Code* was abandoned more than 50 years ago. How far do you think Hollywood has strayed from the principles and prohibitions referred to above?

Although some Hollywood productions might show respect to religion, religion is often misrepresented or ridiculed in modern films and TV shows. Often, the ridicule is framed in comedy language, and it is laughed at and ignored even by people of faith.

7 Mondello, B. (2008, August 8). *Remembering Hollywood's Hays Code, 40 Years on*. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://www.npr.org/2008/08/08/93301189/remembering-hollywoods-hays-code-40-years-on.

Activity 5.2b: Analyze it!

Examine each of the following quotes from films, and discuss how they challenge religion. Which *Uṣul ad-Dīn* do they contradict? What would be a suitable response to each of these? Once you have formulated your own response, view the response provided for the quotes on the following page.

1. "You created man. Man suffers enormous amounts of pain. Man dies. Maybe you should have had a few more brainstorming sessions prior to creation. You rested on the seventh day. Maybe you should have spent that day on compassion. You know what? You are not worth it."[8]

2. Homer Simpson: Bart, would you like to say grace?
   Bart Simpson: Dear God, we paid for all of this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing.[9]

8 IMDb.com. (1998, December 25). *Patch Adams*. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0129290/

9 IMDb.com., *The Simpsons: Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish*. Retrieved on October 24, 2022 from https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0757023/

Response to the first quote:

One of the core principles of our faith is that Allah ﷻ is Just. Even though human beings go through challenges and difficulties, there is wisdom behind these sufferings, and it does not imply that Allah ﷻ is unkind or not compassionate. There are different reasons for suffering that people go through, including the laws of cause and effect, free will, and suffering as a means of spiritual growth. Having faith in the unseen—as the Qurʾān calls us toward—means that even if all of the reasons for suffering and pain are not clear for us, we do not think—even for a moment—that Allah ﷻ is mistreating us. As well, the concept of Allah ﷻ "resting" does not exist within Islam. He is needless of sleep or rest. He is the All-Compassionate and the All-Merciful.

Response to the second quote:

The principle of *Tawḥīd* states that Allah ﷻ is the One and Only Creator and Nurturer. He is the Source of all of our provisions *(Rāziq).* Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"Indeed, it is Allah who is the All-Provider (One who Continuously Provides), the Firm Possessor of Strength."* [10]

The money that we earn is part of Allah's *rizq* (sustenance) for us. We attain it because of the never-ending blessings that He gives to us. The food we consume, the desire we have for this food, our ability to consume it; our organs and bodies; our intellect and ability to do things; etc. are all from the Mercy of Allah ﷻ. When we ponder upon **all of the blessings** which Allah ﷻ constantly showers down upon us, we should become bewildered. Thus, rather than saying "thanks for nothing" we should say "thanks for everything"—for what I comprehend and what I do not comprehend!

Although it is quite simple and straightforward to respond to such statements, during the course of a film, most people are not intellectually engaged with its content.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51), Verse 58.

Activity 5.2c: Reflection and Discussion

Reflect and write down your thoughts to the questions below, then discuss them with your classmates.

1. What do you think repeated exposure to these types of statements can lead to?

2. Why is it fairly common to find such statements in popular films, whereas statements that reaffirm faith are very rare?

3. What are other ways that television and movies can convey an anti-religious agenda?

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